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Captain Scott Kelly
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Mar 9 '19 at 8pm
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Performance by Antonio Sánchez
Mar 15 '19 at 8pm
Watch the stunning Oscar winning film—live with drummer Antonio Sánchez—recreating his Grammy Award-winning score that provides the heartbeat of the film.

Peter Sagal - Host of NPR's *Wait Wait Don't Tell Me!*
Mar 16 '19 at 8pm
Go behind the scenes exploring the show's most memorable moments in an uproarious and unforgettable evening!

Piaf! The Show
Mar 17 '19 at 2pm
The rags-to-riches story of the Parisian singer's career told through her songs and previously unreleased photographs and images of Edith Piaf's Paris.

Pink Floyd LaserSpectacular
Mar 22 '19 at 8pm
Experience two hours of the music of Pink Floyd, with mind-melding visuals in a breathtaking laser lightshow!

The Phantom Tollbooth
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DRIFTWOOD COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2018

SCOTT FEINBLATT

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Photo Courtesy of Carpenter Performing Arts Center
Design by Richie Beckman

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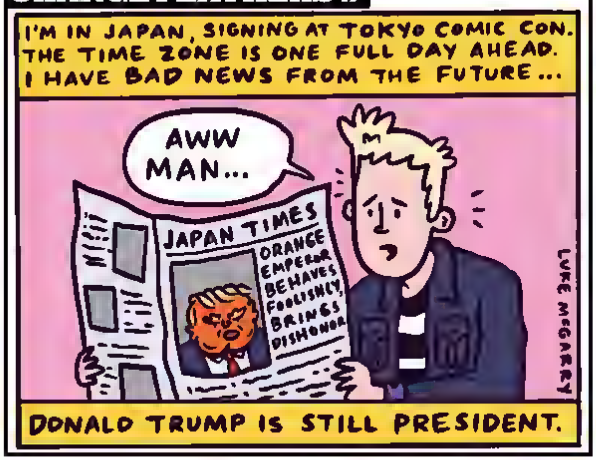
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DONALD TRUMP IS STILL PRESIDENT.

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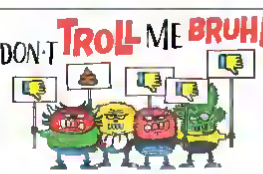

"Rule of claw . . . they are leaving their BS shithole countries behind and attempting to inject their emotional cripple culture here ... no grassy ass."
—Kris Moore, in response to "Notes From the Deluged Migrant Caravan in Tijuana" by Sam Slovick, *OC Weekly*, Dec. 1

Our response: Your English is no better than your Spanish, but mostly you are full of "shirt."

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"A Life Pleasing to the Lord"

Man guilty in wild 1983 murder wanted federal judge to toss governor's parole denial

Ivan Von Staich, one of California's most prolific and vexatious litigants, sat inside San Quentin State Prison last month hoping he'd soon be freed following horrific offenses he committed on December 8, 1983—when Ronald Reagan lived in the White House; radio audiences heard Paul McCartney's new "Say Say Say", and *Time* magazine fretted about the then-Soviet Union abandoning arms-control talks.

Just 20 days before that crime spree, authorities moved the 27-year-old Staich from prison to a Long Beach halfway house for parole. The professional tree trimmer had served three years for conspiring with the Aryan Brotherhood to mail criminal threats in a Riverside County arson case. During that incarceration, he received letters and nude photographs from Cynthia Bess, a girlfriend who also made conjugal visits. But Bess' interest waned and she eventually married another man, medical engineer Robert Topper.

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» R. SCOTT MOXLEY

With his newfound semi-freedom at the halfway house, Staich began his search to confront Mrs. Topper and her new beau. It took 67 telephone calls, but the parolee ultimately tracked the couple to a Santa Ana neighborhood. He drove there, parked down the street, put on gloves, entered the back yard, cut the phone line, kicked in the front door and, carrying a hammer, entered the home. A panicked Topper yelled, "Get out of here!"

Strike up the dueling banjos. Alert the Coen brothers. With Topper firing his handgun, an enraged Staich advanced down a hallway to a bedroom. Three bullets struck him, including one that severed a finger. The parolee somehow managed to reach Topper without dying, beat him with the hammer, wrestle away control of the gun and fatally shoot the homeowner in the head, neck and back.

Meanwhile, Staich's ex-girlfriend was pointing another handgun at him and pulling the trigger. He later recounted to a psychiatrist that he'd once again run toward gunfire, but this time realized she was firing loud blanks. Using the butt of the real gun, he beat the woman's skull and caused permanent brain damage that required two lobotomies.

In May 1986, Orange County Superior Court Judge Robert R. Fitzgerald sentenced Staich to a term of 30 years-to-life for second-degree murder, attempted murder and infliction of great bodily injury. Over the next quarter of a century, the inmate took classes on anger management, Bible studies and legal affairs. He got married and divorced. In 2000, he began calling himself a Christian, telling officials he wanted to live a "life pleasing to the Lord." He also conceded that Topper had a right to defend his home from intrusion and his mindset about women had been wrong. Though a probation officer labeled him "vicious," prison doctors gave him favorable psychological reports that declared him free from "antisocial thinking." A parole board granted his request for release in September 2011.

RICHIE BECKMAN

But five months later, Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. rejected the psychological findings and vetoed the parole. "I find that [he] has not shown genuine remorse," the governor wrote after noting the inmate has "a long history" of threatening and violent behavior. "This lack of remorse is a further indication that Mr. Staich has not dealt with the issues that led to his violent behavior and would present an unreasonable risk to public safety if released at this time."

Brown's decision infuriated Staich, who launched what has turned out to be an all-out six-year courthouse war. He's filed a whopping 32 lawsuits. He likes to type sentences in all caps. Many of his briefs challenge the integrity of the governor whom he says relied on an outdated psychological report and misinformation to reach his decision. The core of the inmate's argument is that he's so far "unjustly" served 35 years in custody and accumulated prison good-time credits worth 45 years.

"State officials used false evidence to resentence [me] to life in prison without the possibility of parole, illegally converting a one-count second-degree murder into a special circumstances life without parole verdict, which can only be ordered by a jury," Staich wrote in one of his complaints. "[This situation is] forcing [me] to serve a disproportional sentence for second-degree murder when California has already released over 400 first-degree murderers on parole."

In August, U.S. Magistrate Judge Gail J. Standish dismissed the inmate's latest 25 claims, calling many of them frivolous and factually disingenuous. Standish also recommended that Staich be labeled a vexatious litigant and blocked from either appealing the case or filing new ones without undertaking a court screening process. "Both state and federal courts have rejected Petitioner's myriad of direct and indirect attacks on the governor's decision," she observed. "His pattern and practice of continually re-raising claims adversely resolved against him has risen to a level of harassment."

Los Angeles-based U.S. District Court Judge Dean D. Pregerson last month accepted Standish's recommendations and ended the 62-year-old killer's dream of release, at least until another governor sees the case differently.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

POLITICAL FOOTBALL
» STEVE LOWERY

Cleveland Browns vs. Carolina Panthers

Cleveland update: A local radio station announced it would not be playing the holiday classic "Baby It's Cold Outside." You know the song, a duet between a man and a woman involving some playful banter about, but not limited to, drugging, kidnapping and the belief that when women say "No," what they really mean is, "If you really loved me, you'd force me." Some folks in Cleveland are upset, claiming the PC Police have struck again and destroyed yet another holiday tradition. Here's the thing, I'm not even sure this is a holiday song. Pretty much it's about a dude with a boner and a mommy complex who is likely agoraphobic. As for traditions, well, they're overrated. When "Baby It's Cold Outside" was written in 1944, women being able to vote had been a tradition less then 25 years, and 10 years later they had made so much progress that the most reliable laugh-getters on *I Love Lucy* were threats or outright examples of domestic violence. It wasn't that long ago that it was a tradition to heed the wise, fatherly counsel of Bill Cosby, who, come to think of it, wore an awful lot of sweaters, didn't he?

Carolina update: You know, a Republican is the dude who is always accusing his wife of cheating on him, always making wild accusations and saying inappropriate things to her in public and...it turns out, he's the cheater. (Also, everyone knows he's a racist. C'mon, he just is.) That's what's been going on in North Carolina with the GOP using tales of voter fraud to suppress voting and then, when that doesn't work, suppressing voting with outright voter fraud. In a tightly contested congressional race, with less than 250 votes separating opponents, it was found that 40 percent of absentee ballots requested by African-Americans did not make it back to election officials. Compare that with a 17 percent non-return rate for white voters, and you're absolutely in no way at all surprised. Numerous eyewitnesses say they saw Republican operatives posing as election officials taking ballots from poor, elderly black voters, in some cases saying they would fill the ballots out for them. What kind of scab of an excuse of a human being would you have to be to do that? Right. Someone let Dana Rohrabacher know of this exciting new opportunity.

Root for: Cleveland. As bad as "Baby It's Cold Outside" is, it's still not worse than "The Christmas Shoes," a song about a kid leaving his dying mother's bedside to buy her shoes so that when she gets to heaven she'll look really hot for Jesus, because, you know, Baby, it's cold outside.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

A (Bed) Bug's Life

» MATT COKER

My Bed Bug Lawyer sounds like the title of an un-aired *Saturday Night Live* skit, but in this instance it refers to an Encino law firm that recently sued Disney on behalf of a client who was allegedly bitten by bedbugs at the Disney land Hotel in Anaheim.

Ivy Eldridge, who resides in the Inland Empire, visited the Disneyland Hotel for two nights in April and was left with bites on her ears, face, neck, back and arms, according to her complaint filed earlier this month in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Citing physical, emotional and financial injuries, Eldridge seeks unspecified monetary and punitive damages in her suit against Disneyland Hotel, the Walt Disney Co. and Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

So far, the Mouse's reps aren't squawking.

Among My Bed Bug Lawyer Inc. founder and CEO Brian Virag's clients besides Eldridge is Sabrina Jales St. Pierre, who contends in her lawsuit that she was out of work as a Victoria's Secret model for two months after serving as a bedbug meal at the Embassy Suites Palm Desert.

Disney Resort hotels have a history of allegations and legal actions involving bedbugs, as readers learned in my September 2016 story, "It's a Large World After All When It Comes to Bed Bug Complaints in Anaheim." My jumping-off point was a San Leandro family's suit that claimed an August 2014 stay at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel and Spa left them with bedbug bites.

At that time, other Grand Californian guests had reported bedbugs in September 2010, January 2011, April 2011, June 2011, sometime before June 10, 2011, January 2012, July 2012, April 2013 and sometime before Aug. 20, 2013.

Guests of the same hotel also reported to the online Bed Bug Registry of being bitten, although they did not specifically say by bedbugs, in May 2011, June 2013 and sometime before July 30, 2014.

The Bed Bug Registry also had reports from the Disneyland Hotel twice in November 2010 and once apiece in June 2012, prior to April 2013, sometime before Aug. 8, 2014, and February 2015. There were also reports of bites of some kind in June 2012 and April 2015 at Disney's original Anaheim hotel.

Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel showed up with Bed Bug Registry reports in April 2008, sometime before December 2011, May 2012 and twice in April 2015.

Good thing A Bug's Land closed at Disney California Adventure last September.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Stalker Alert

You're my neighbor's ex-boyfriend who thought you'd prove your unfailing love by violating her restraining order, breaking into her back yard, and crouching under a small palm tree. I thought your determination would wane when the police pinpointed your location from a helicopter searchlight and threatened to sic dogs on you, but you kept steadfast. You proved two things: your commitment to my terrified neighbor, and the necessity of her restraining order. Check yo-self, quit scaring my neighbor and stay off my block!

HEY YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com

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FEARLESS for the Holidays

WHERE TO GO, EAT AND BE ENTERTAINED TO SURVIVE THE SEASON

By OC Weekly Staff

We are not stupid. We know that for most of December, you will be curled up in a ball in the corner of your domicile, humming *"nehn-nehn-nehn"* to drown out the unrelenting inner demons, negative headlines and family-obligation pleas. You know: holiday cheer. However, we also realize that you live vicariously through *OC Weekly*'s ripping Calendar and longer event previews. So for your utter enjoyment, we've compiled the best of our holiday-themed listings in one handy-dandy place. Should you choose to book a place at any of the following venues requiring reservations, but then fail to show up because you remain balled up ever tighter, please disclose that you were misled by fake news in the *Orange County Register*.

Holiday Time at Disneyland Resort

There's no place like the House of the Mouse for the holidays. From the towering tree on Main Street to the bright-blue icicles dangling from Sleeping Beauty's castle, Disneyland's Christmastime conversion is always a stunning feat. The Haunted Mansion mashup of jack-o'-lanterns and Santa hats remains a most delightful nightmare carrying over from Halloween Time. It's a Small World is just as shimmering with its season's greetings décor inside as it is when the ride's famed façade's Christmas-colored bulbs light up at dusk. Add such decadent holiday treats as candy cane beignets and fun parades for kiddos to max the merriment. Remember to eat a gingerbread Christmas churro and thank a cast member! And good luck trying to find one of those Disney holiday-spirit jerseys while you're there. *1313 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, disneyland.disney.go.com. Check website for hours. Through Jan. 6, 2019. $97-135.*

Holiday Décor Workshop

If you're perhaps over the same old Christmas decorations you've put up year after year, then perhaps it's time to get creative and improvise with something new. Plus, this workshop's organizers added mimosas and sweet treats into the mix! At this hands-on class at the Expo Arts Center, you'll learn how to make a wooden Christmas tree that you can take home and display wherever you please. Best of all, donations will partly go toward Toys for Tots, so underserved kids in the community can have a great Christmas, too! *Expo Arts Center, 4321 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, (562) 595-0081, www.expo-artscenter.org. Dec. 8, 10 a.m. $45 (includes supplies, treats and booze).*

Make & Take Workshops

San Clemente Art Supply hosts two classes at which you create or decorate, then take home what you've made—and gain the skills to keep on creating. The low fee includes everything you'll need, or you can apply it to purchasing a kit at the end of the class. Space is limited in the lovely, historic studio, so register beforehand. The Collaged and Embellished Greeting Cards session includes three blank cards and envelopes to fashion personalized messages with paint, markers, collage materials and maybe some bedazzlement—tips and techniques you can use on any paper, anywhere, any time of year. The Glass and Paper Mache Ornaments class allows you to paint, marble and/or embellish two glass ornaments and one papier-mâché animal, such as a saddled camel or humble bear. Master Marabu's easy drop-and-dip marbling and Lumiere acrylics, known for high shine, extreme opacity and durability; both are ideal for these dimensional surfaces. *1531 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, (949) 369-6603, www.scartsupply.com. Greeting Cards, Dec. 8, 10 a.m. $5, Ornaments, Dec. 15, 10 a.m. $8.*

Dana Point Harbor Boat Parade of Lights

The theme for the 44th nautical caravan is a Western Wonderland, and if any of the vessels look as charming as the parade's logo of a seahorse sporting a cowboy hat, it's going to be a jolly spectacle indeed. Competitors vie for awards in Best Theme, Best Use of Lights, Best Animation, Most Colorful, Most Original, Best Sailboat, Best Powerboat, Judges' Choice, and the Perpetual Trophy for the Yacht Club With the Most Entries. We prefer the dinghies and SUPs and kayaks, especially if dogs are aboard dressed as seahorse cowpokes. Use the route map on the website to pick your spot at this rodeo, if comfort is required, make restaurant reservations. It seems as if each year, the landlorked part of the harbor is decked out with ever more lights in strands and pinwheels and animated lobsters—you'd think there were a trophy for Best Dock. Maybe there should be! *34555 Golden Lantern, Dana Point, (949) 923-2255, danapointharbor.com/boat-parade/. Fri.-Sat., festivities, 4:30 p.m., parade, 7:30 p.m. Through Dec. 15. Free, additional paid parking is available at Doheny State Beach, with a free trolley running 3:30-10:30 p.m.*

Rock Out

Just because the end of the month is dedicated to Jesus's birthday doesn't

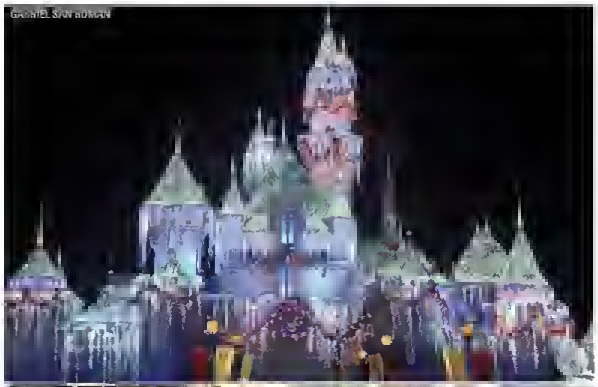
mean metalheads should sit out the rest of December. And for those who favor chaos over caroling, there's plenty of headbanging at Garden Amp's winter edition of Rock Out. The fire and fury of Metallica, AC/DC, and Guns N' Roses come courtesy of the tribute bands who can match the real bands lick for lick—at a fraction of the price (a mere $15 for all the shredding you can stomach). That leaves plenty of extra money for your true holiday shopping essentials: weed and whiskey. *Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com. Dec. 8, 5 p.m. $15. All ages*

Sawdust Winter Fantasy

Fifteen decorated trees have transformed the Sawdust Festival grounds into an enchanting forest where a balloon diva and magicians roam. In the 182 artists' booths, work will be handcrafted in leather, ceramic, mosaic, mixed media, photography and painting right in front of you. Be sure to stay until dark to see the glassblowers make some molten magic. But don't just watch at this winter fantasy; do. Try your hand at the pottery wheel; the greenware you throw is free to take home, or make pots to be glazed and shipped wherever you like for $25. Snow will be falling on the Towne Square for the best possible photo op with Mr. Kris Kringle—though be forewarned, Santa takes a break between 1 and 2 p.m. That's the perfect hour to watch a marionette show or take a complimentary arts-and-crafts class. Or find a merry and bright spot near one of the three stages for live music while sipping something alcoholic from the Sawdust Saloon and snacking on popcorn or a taco. Then ride that buzz as you finish off your holiday shopping. *935 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-3030, sawdustartfestival.org/festivals/winter-fantasy/. Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Through Dec. 16. $4-$8, kids younger than 5 and military (plus three family members), free*

Winter Moon Market

If you've not yet been to Makara Center for the Arts, this holiday boutique is a great introduction to the nonprofit lending library where arts and culture are celebrated with warmth and a touch of surrealism. Book clubs, science talks, art shows, performances and parties with beautiful cakes keep minds open and curiosity fed. The Winter Moon Market comes at the end of a yearlong celebration of the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and provides a peek into Makara's 2019 programs. Shop for original art, jewelry, vinyl and vintage clothing; get your tarot read; and take in a presentation by Angela Mary Magick. The ritual expert and tarot reader is a force for good who claims "magic is your birthright, and everything's a spell." *811 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 465-1190, www.makaracenterarts.org. Dec. 9, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. All ages*



RICHIE HECKMAN

Blanca Nieves' Christmas

The stage isn't just for Charles Dickens adaptations come Christmastime. Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble brings the Chicana holiday tale *Blanca Nieves' Christmas*, written by local playwright Yolanda Mendiveles and directed by Diana Burbano. Set in East Los Angeles during the 1950s, the story of Blanca, a recently widowed mother of six facing hardships for the holidays, is based on Mendiveles' own upbringing. With an eviction and many mouths to feed, Blanca perseveres with the help of neighbors and extended *familia* in making Christmas a wondrous day despite the odds. As with Pancho Claus' sleigh ride, the play is one night only, so don't miss it! *Grand Central Art Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 567-7233, www.grandcentralartcenter.com. Dec. 9, 6 p.m. $10*

Johnny Mathis Christmas Concert

Sure, there's the crackle of wood in the fireplace and the rip of wrapping paper being sliced by scissors, but the sounds of Christmas aren't complete without the velvety voice of Johnny Mathis. The legendary crooner became known as "Mr. Christmas" after the release of *Merry Christmas* 60 years ago. Like his hero Nat King Cole, Mathis mastered holiday classics such as "The Christmas Song" and "O Holy Night." Thankfully, the 83-year-old singer still brings yuletide cheer to audiences, including a stop in Costa Mesa. Find an ugly Christmas sweater to wear and let Mathis serve as musical guide through a winter wonderland of song! *Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. Dec. 9, 7 p.m. $79*

Five Crowns Holiday Menu and Caroling

Even if you can only afford apps and drinks at the adjacent SideDoor bar, the Corona del Mar landmark is a must-see family holiday destination. Modeled after one of England's oldest inns, the Victorian-themed restaurant actually gives off a Christmas vibe year-round, but that's amped up nightly through Dec. 30 with the additions of holiday décor, twinkling lights and wood crackling in the fireplaces. The costumed Mixed Company handbell carolers continue a tradition that stretches back 29 years by performing holiday classics while roaming through Five Crowns and SideDoor. A December-only menu of holiday gastronomy classics includes roasted goose, beef steak Neptune, Jidori chicken and the Lawry group restaurant's signature prime rib. Junior portions of signature entrées and a Royal Feast children's menu are available, as are bookings of events for hundreds of guests or private rooms for more intimate gatherings. Early dinners through Dec. 23 start at 4:30 p.m., and reservations are being taken for seatings all day on Christmas Eve. *Five Crowns, 3801 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar, (949) 760-0331, www.thefivecrowns.com. Open*

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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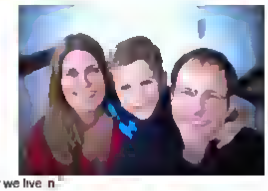
St. James Church Welcomes New Senior Pastor

Costa Mesa, CA – November 26, 2018

St. James Anglican Church has announced that Rev Canon Brian Schulz will be instituted as their Rector (Senior Pastor) by Bishop Right Rev. Dr. Keith Andrews at a special service held at 10 am on Sunday, December 9. The Service of Institution will take place at St. James Anglican Church, located at 2995-A Airway Avenue in Costa Mesa.

Senior Warden Dr. Margie Armstrong indicated there was a nation-wide search for the new leader...a process that began earlier in the year. According to Dr. Armstrong "Pastor Brian Schulz is an experienced leader in the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) and in church planting in Southern California. He will bring a bright, new energy to Costa Mesa in order to draw more people to Christ and St. James. We are looking forward to Pastor Brian and his family's arrival at St. James in early December."

Pastor Brian Schulz joined the Peace Corps after college and worked as an English teacher in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He returned to the U.S. and started a career in marketing. Eventually, he began theological studies at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena. While in seminary, he began working with a group of people, who with him formed Christ's Church in Yucaipa. Pastor Brian comes to St. James with over ten years' experience as a Senior Pastor in Yucaipa. Pastor Brian says: "St. James is a wonderful church at Spirit-filled Christians who vibrantly emanate the love and joy of the Lord. I want to see St. James fulfill the call Jesus himself gave to the church, to make disciples who love and serve the community we live in."



St. James Anglican Church was established in 1946 and is affiliated with the Anglican Church in North America. St. James is a member of the Diocese of Western Anglicans. For the last four years, the church facilities have been located on 2995-A Airway Avenue in Costa Mesa.

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ADVERTORIAL

FEARLESS for the Holidays

»FROM PAGE 9

Sun.-Thurs., 4:30-9 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 4:30-10 p.m. through Dec. 23, Dec. 24, 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Dec. 26-30, opens at 5 p.m. Parties of five or fewer guests can make online reservations. Call for parties larger than five or holiday to-go orders. Small plates, $16-$29, entrées, $26-$60. Full bar. Valet parking is available. All ages, but minors must be accompanied by adults.

A Very Merry Unscripted Christmas

No matter how much work you put into it, the holiday season never seems to go as expected. Not even in those sappy movies that run on the Hallmark Channel. But the Modjeska Unscripted Theater cast allow you an attempt at having some say in the ensuing chaos with its improvised-nightly *A Very Merry Unscripted Christmas* at the Modjeska Playhouse. For the third year, this talented ensemble take audience suggestions and turn them into an original production better than what you'll find on cable. Ditch the couch, bottle of wine and box of tissues, and give your anxiety a night off by embracing the magic of improv. *Modjeska Playhouse, 21084 Bake Pkwy., Ste. 104, Lake Forest, (949) 445-3674, www.mphstage.org. Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 5 p.m. Through Dec. 22. $23-$28.*

Snoopy House Holiday Display

More than 50 years ago, Jim Jordan took some plywood and created a holiday display for his family's Costa Mesa home. Characters from Charles Schulz's beloved *Peanuts* comic strip were large as life, enjoying the season. The spectacle grew to include moving scenes and even a nightly visit from Santa himself! Kids excitedly lined up, hot cider in hand, to tell the big man himself what they wanted and score a free candy cane and photo. The tradition was endangered by financial struggles in 2011, but the city helped to keep Charlie Brown in the game, moving him, his faithful beagle Snoopy and his pals to the lawn between City Hall and the Police Department. Community non-profit groups vie for booth space to sell baked goods and hot chocolate, while a stage offers live music and entertainment. A mini train ride keeps youngsters happy, while soapy "snow" falls around them. And don't miss the themed trees decorated by city departments in front of City Hall. *77 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, www.costamesaca.gov/residents/annual-events/snoopy-house-holiday-display. Dec. 14-23, 5:30-9 p.m. Free.*

Holiday Celebration and Holiday Bazaar at OC Market Place

The longtime open-air mall at the Orange County Fairgrounds has two different two-day events at which photos can be taken with Santa Claus. First, it's a weekend Holiday Celebration with Santa photo-ops, special concession stands and free face-painting on both days, as well as Sunday-only holiday-themed puppet shows. The Thursday and Friday after bring a Holiday Bazaar with more posing with Santa, specialty food and drinks, kids' activities, and shopping for gifts from local stores and businesses. Buy your ticket in advance online for a free hot chocolate or at the gate for discounted admission to Winter Fest OC (tubing, snow play and more). *OC Market Place, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 557-0420, www.ocmarketplace.com. Holiday Celebration, Dec. 16-17, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $2, but free for military members with ID and children 12 and younger. Free parking through Gates 2 and 10. Holiday Bazaar, Dec. 20-21, 2-8 p.m. $5. All ages.*

Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade

The history of this annual holiday extravaganza dates back to 1907, when gondolier John Scarpa took a group of passengers from Pasadena across the bay. Newport Harbor's first lighted boat parade took place a year later with Scarpa's gondola and eight other small boats. It's generally grown ever since, and for this year's 109th run, more than 1 million people on shore and aboard vessels are expected to see lit-up tubs, ships, yachts, party boats, and shoreline homes and buildings. Bundle up and be careful, as some participants are pretty well lit also. *Newport Harbor, Balboa Peninsula, parking is limited, so arrive early at the structure next to Newport Landing, 309 Palm St., Ste. A, Newport Beach, (949) 675-0551, christmasparade-boats.com. There is also the pay lot next to Balboa Pier (1 Balboa Pier, Newport Beach) and valet parking at Balboa Pavilion (400 Main St., Newport Beach). Dec. 19-23, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Free, but there are various paid options for guaranteed seating along the shore or aboard cruises. All ages.*

Snowy Night Paint & Sip Event

Leave your holiday worries at the door of the cozy Bistro St. Germain and put your creativity to work, as the Paint Sesh's boss lady Chelz Franzer leads you through the steps toward painting your own version of a Van Gogh-esque Christmas scene titled *Snowy Night*. Take advantage of the French restaurant's happy hour specials, sip on a soothing cocktail, and feel your stress melt away with each brushstroke. Now those are some happy little trees! *Bistro St Germain, 302 Main St., Seal Beach, thepaintsesh.com/publicsesh/paint-night-seal-beach-ca-snowy-night/ Dec 19, 7 p.m. $35 (does not include food or beverages) 21+*

The Nutcracker From Coast City Ballet

The recent *Nutcracker and The Four Realms* may have taken some extreme liberties with the original E.T.A. Hoffman tale "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King" for modern audiences, but sometimes it's great to go back to a classic version. Under the direction of Clara D'Autilia, Coast City Ballet offers a traditional production with adult and children performers that is appropriate for the whole family. As the story goes, enchanted by Herr Drosselmeyer's gift of a soldier-like nutcracker, a young girl named Clara develops a close relationship that twists into a magical friendship when the toy comes alive late Christmas Eve. After the Nutcracker and his army fight off the dreaded Mouse King, he becomes a prince and ships off with Clara to the Land of Sweets, where they are celebrated with performances by the Sugar Plum Fairy and representatives of sweets from around the world. Featuring the iconic compositions of Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (which, frankly, the overall holiday season wouldn't feel the same without), this is one transcendent Christmas production that will uplift audiences with its timeless beauty and memorable delights. *Huntington Beach High School Historical Theatre, 1905 Main St., Huntington Beach, www.coastcityballet.com. Dec 21-22, 7 p.m. $23-$25.*

Long Beach Record Swap

After you've scraped together the cash from all those returned presents, the sight of this bimonthly record swap at Alex's Bar will seem almost too good to be true. Dozens of local record shops and private dealers meet with hundreds of vinyl-thirsty collectors to make our holidays happy (and loud). Let's face it: You were bound to end up at a bar over the hohdays anyway. We suggest getting a double shot of joy by getting your hands on the best selection of records in Long Beach inside a place that more resembles Satan's workshop than Santa's. Start the new year with a fresh collection of old sounds and memorabilia that spans the sonic stratosphere from punk to ska to hip-hop to metal to latin and everything in between. *Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. Dec 30, 1-6 p.m. Free 21+*

Sega Genecide NYE Show

Though the Wayfarer is usually a solid destination to see a live cover band on holidays like Halloween and Christmas, it knows that on New Year's Eve, it has to bring out the big guns. The kind of guns that eat, breathe and shit '90s songs. When OC band the Gromble started their spin-off band Sega Genecide in 2010, they figured it would be a fun way to knock out some nostalgic tunes on a Friday night—but it turned out to be much more than that. After only a few gigs, they'd already built a following. By the time New Year's Eve 2011 rolled around, that following was rabid. Today, not much has changed, though the songs of Nirvana, Smash Mouth and Eminem seem to get older with time, the punchy panache of Sega Genecide continue to make them timeless all the way to midnight. *The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, wwwwayfarercm.com. Dec 31, 9 p.m. $15-$20 21+*

TIME Nightclub NYE '19 Party

Hopefully, one of the DJs spinning at this New Year's Eve ball has an EDM version of "Auld Lang Syne" handy because we're feeling extremely glad to kiss 2018 goodbye! Come dance your toils, troubles and obstacles of this long, long year away by reveling in TIME Nightclub's vibrant party atmosphere. A rotating lineup of DJs will spin Top 40, hip-hop and rap songs mashed together, while the countdown from New York's Times Square will be broadcast on television screens throughout the venue. The immersive lighting displays and interior design of the club look to be exciting, and all guests will receive a complimentary glass of Champagne to toast with at midnight. If you want to take your dance experience to the next level, VIP packages are offered that include table and bottle service and a lounge seating area for your group. Take this opportunity to (responsibly) honor your survival of yet another year, and may your good energy and vibes cross over into 2019! *1875 Newport Blvd., Ste. B245, Costa Mesa, (714) 548-5062, timenightclub.com Dec 31, 9 p.m. $54-$3,005*

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EVAN TETREAULT

fri/12/07

[FILM]

Not Quite Krampus . . .
Gremlins

Thanksgiving needs *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, and Christmas needs *Gremlins*. It's a (monster) movie equal parts gore and slapstick that claws through all the schmaltz and treacle to reveal what's truly important about the holidays: family, community and following the instructions that come with your presents. Semi-spoiler: Santa's most impactful appearance is as an off-screen corpse, if that helps to clarify *Gremlins*' position on tradition. Following the screening, star Zach Galligan appears for a Q&A and provides the next best thing to a mogwai's-eye view of the filmmaking process. If *Gremlins* doesn't quite attempt to destruct/deconstruct every ethos of its delirious sequel, it's still one of those I-can't-believe-they-let-them-make-this '80s classics.

Gremlins with Q&A with Zach Galligan at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422; thefridacinema.org. 7:30 p.m., also Sat. $7-$10 —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[FOOD & DRINK]

FOR PHO'S SAKE
Fountain Valley Pho Festival

When an entire city unites to celebrate a particular cuisine, you know it's going to be good! That is what is happening for three days in Fountain Valley for the Pho Festival. You can not only explore a showcase of one of Vietnam's most popular dishes, but you can also visit a variety of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese food vendors. Don't forget to place your vote for the Best Pho! Then learn how to cook pho and spring rolls; experience carnival games and rides; sing along with a live karaoke band; take in musical and dance performances; lounge in the beer, wine and spirits garden; and more. And it's all free!

Fountain Valley Pho Festival at FV Sports Park, 16400 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, (562) 496-5959; www.ocphofest.com. 5 p.m., also Sat.-Sun. Free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

sat/12/08

[FOOD & DRINK]

A Good Time for Ale!
Brew Ho Ho Holiday Ale Festival

It's time to get Blitzen! This weekend marks the return of OC's beloved holiday beer fest. The seventh annual Brew Ho Ho Holiday Ale Festival brings to Anaheim's Phoenix Club more than 100 craft beers from across California and beyond for unlimited tasting. Upon entrance, attendees get a little commemorative cup they can fill with as many samples as their jolly bellies can handle. There are also food trucks on hand, including the Viking Truck and Cousin's Maine Lobster, plus live music, beer-themed swag for Christmas-shopping purposes, and pictures with Santa. Because after four hours of unlimited drinking, it's the perfect opportunity to tell St. Nick what you *really* want for Christmas. And maybe get kicked off the Nice List.

Brew Ho Ho Holiday Ale Festival at Phoenix Club, 1340 S. Sanderson Ave., Anaheim, (714) 563-4166, brewhoho.com. Noon. $20-$55. 21+ —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

FEEL THE LOVE
Holiday Love Jam

It may not be seen as traditional to go to Holiday Love Jam as it would be to visit some Christmas carolers, but who's keeping score? Tonight's event at the Honda Center will bring some good cheer into your hearts, courtesy of some of R&B's musical heavyweights, including the sultry, beyond-talented En Vogue (and we mean seriously talented—check out online videos of them singing a cappella!); romantic heartthrob Keith Sweat; Charlie Wilson, Boyz II Men, and more. Bring your loved ones along, and feel enchanted by the heartwarming atmosphere as you experience some of the loveliest melodies and ballads. It'll bring some much-needed warmth to the holiday season.

Holiday Love Jam at the Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (800) 745-3000, www.hondacenter.com. 7 p.m. $45-$300 —AIMEE MURILLO

sun/12/09

[CONCERT]

Brothers In Song

Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore

Whenever Dave Alvin plays a show in Orange County, it's guaranteed to be special. The Downey native and founding Blasters member always brings it, and adding his longtime pal, Texan Jimmie Dale Gilmore, to the equation is sure to be different than a usual Alvin show. When the two take the stage at the Coach House, they'll play some tunes off their collaboration, the aptly titled *Downey to Lubbock*, which was released last summer. The record was exactly what fans would expect: a seamless blend of early rock and traditional Western music. It's a delightful listen, which will no doubt translate when the two friends perform together tonight.

Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930, thecoachhouse.com. 7 p.m. $25. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

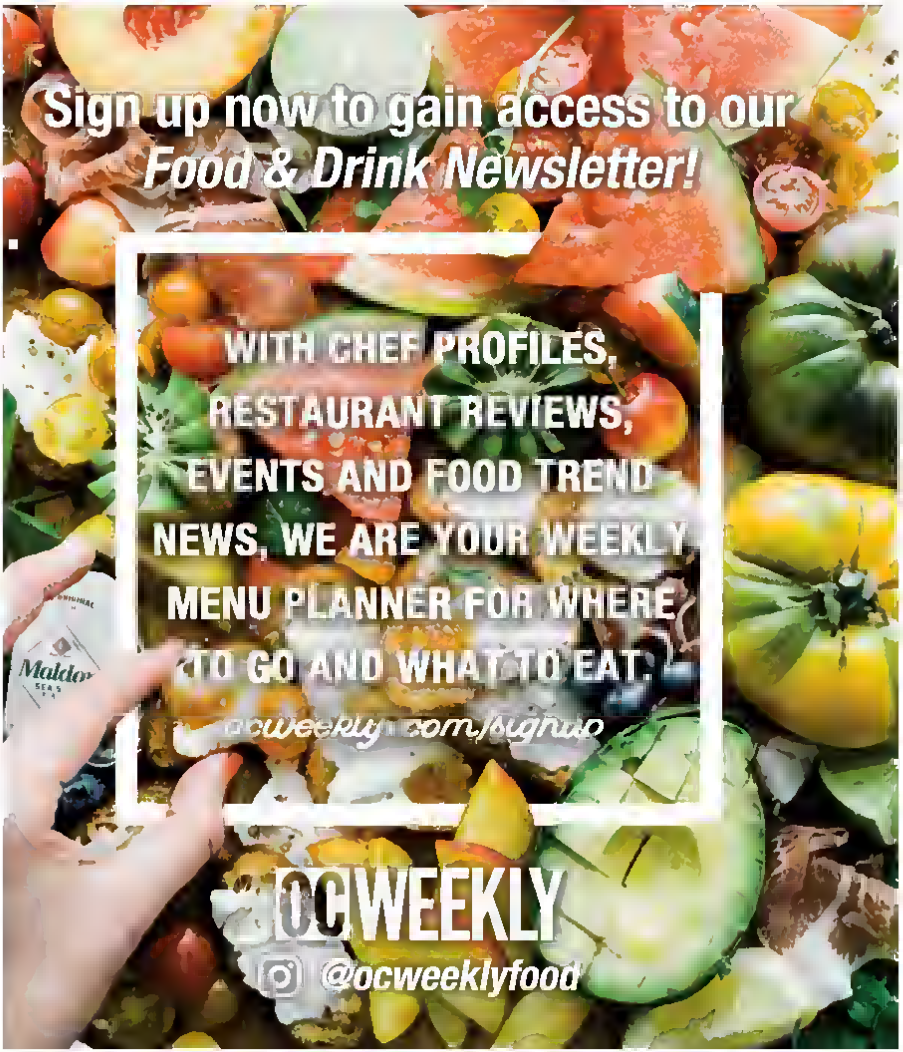
[BENEFITS]

Feel Good Fest

Wreck the Halls

In the spirit of giving, today's art and music showcase raises donations for the Sidewalk Project, which benefits the homeless population living on Skid Row. Vendors will be selling wares like jewelry, clothing, art prints, candles, leather and other goods, while photography by Jessica Moncrief, Wednesday Aja and Monique Arellanes will be unveiled on Harvelle's walls. The Sidewalk Project Band will be playing a rousing acoustic set, while early arrivers can enjoy the Bloody Mary Bar. Cold brew coffee will be served up by the Coffee Situation. Bring a warm clothing donation or unused toiletry for free entry!

Wreck the Halls at Harvelle's Long Beach, 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, (562) 239-3700, longbeach.harvelles.com. 3 p.m. $10, or free with donation of sock, unopened toiletries or other supplies. 21+ —AIMEE MURILLO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mon/12/10

[CONCERT]

Surf's Up

Beach Fossils and Wavves

If there were ever a lineup to challenge your sense of winter, it's Beach Fossils and Wavves. The New York-based Beach Fossils delight in delivering smooth dream pop with some inspiration from Phil Spector's legendary Wall of Sound and have more frequently indulged in lush instrumental arrangements. Wavves, from San Diego, employ a heavily lo-fi sound and most recently released the *Emo Christmas* EP. Escape from the dreary cold at this performance tonight.

Beach Fossils, Wavves and Spiritual Cramp at the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim. 7 p.m. $25. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/12/11

[FILM]

Death Match

The Seventh Seal

The Frida Cinema's Ingmar Bergman retrospective continues with his 1957 cinema classic, *The Seventh Seal*, based on the legendary director's stage play about the post-Crusades journey home of an existentially lost, shell-shocked Swedish knight who challenges mortality—just then visiting northern Europe as the Black Death—to a chess match. His own life is at stake, not to mention God's existence and ours, as he cheats for a chance at redemption in this dark, funny, inspiring allegory of resistance through intellectual and emotional curiosity. "Do you never stop asking questions?" asks black-robed Death. "Never!" insists our anti-hero.

The Seventh Seal at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 2:30, 5:30, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m. $7-$10. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

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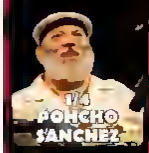

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12/22 THE ENGLISH BEAT
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12/27 DONAVON FRANKENREITER
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12/29 QUEEN NATION
12/31 BEATLES VS STONES – A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN
1/4 PONCHO SANCHEZ
1/5 THE CHAIRMAN AND THE BOARD (RAT PACK TRIBUTE)
1/11 TOMMY EMMANUEL WITH JOHN KNOWLES
1/12 DESPERADO
1/16 BUCKCHERRY
1/17 THE MAGPIE SALUTE (RICH ROBINSON, MARC FORD, SVEN PIPIEN, ERDIE NARSON) / THE STONE FOXES
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3/21 ULI JON ROTH: 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF ELECTRIC SUN AND TOKYO TAPES
3/22 SUPER DIAMONO
3/23 THE BLASTERS
3/28 AL STEWART
3/31 MORGAN JAMES: FROM WHITE TO BLUE, TWO ICONIC ALBUMS CELEBRATED
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4/18 AN EVENING WITH THE MUSICAL BOX
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wed/12/12

[FAMILY EVENTS]

WINTER IN THE WATER

Aquarium Holidays

This year, you can add the Aquarium of the Pacific to the list of places to enjoy some wintertime merriment as it celebrates the holidays with a monthlong slate of festivities. The whole aquarium will be decked out in Christmas decorations, and daily penguin parades (!!!) will happen every morning at 10 a.m. The Great Hall will experience a snowfall, while the classic Dr. Seuss animated special *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* will be screened daily. A scuba-diving Santa Claus will make appearances to bestow treats to the aquarium's residents, while gingerbread-house displays will be exhibited as well. As if that weren't enough, kiddos can rejoice in the snow-play area and craft center and take pics with Santa, while Hanukkah-observing guests can play dreidel and listen to some storytelling. Check the website for special events throughout December!

Aquarium Holidays at Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 590-3100, aquariumofpacific.org/events. 9 a.m. Through Dec. 23. $17.95–$29.95; children 3 and younger, free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[FILM]

Holiday Horrors

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Anyone who has lived through the stress of maintaining normalcy while accommodating traveling in-laws, uppity teens, outdoing the neighbors in holiday decorations, finding a decent Christmas tree, buying presents under a budget, and dealing with a Scrooge-like boss can relate to Clark Griswold as he embarks on yet another family adventure in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo star as the bumbling, optimistic dad and his exhausted, long-suffering wife in the third installment of the *National Lampoon Vacation* series, this time bringing the hilarity to the holidays. While not everyone would go to the lengths Clark does to ensure his Christmas goes smoothly, it's a hoot to watch—and it's possibly even relatable how holidays gone awry can drive everyone out of their minds. A Christmas classic!

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation at Regency South Coast Village, 1561 Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701, regencymovies.com. 7:30 p.m. $8.50. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/12/13

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

[THEATER]

Good Grief!

A Charlie Brown Christmas

Charles M. Shultz and Bill Melendez's classic *Peanuts* special, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, goes to the Chance Theater stage this holiday season, offering yet another way for children and the young at heart to revel in one of the most beloved stories of all time. The play follows the trials and tribulations of Charlie Brown and his friends, including Snoopy, as they produce their own Christmas play and explore the true meaning of the holiday season. Directed by James McHale and adapted by Eric Scharffer, the production also features the iconic music of Vince Guaraldi and a host of carols performed by the *Peanuts* kids, so grab the wee ones and all cynical adults and rediscover the magic of Charles Schultz!

A Charlie Brown Christmas at Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (888) 455-4212, www.chancetheater.com. 7 p.m. Through Dec. 20. $25–$45. —SR DAVIES

[CONCERT]

DARK VALLEY

Death Valley Girls

The four-piece combo from Echo Park have plunged to some dark depths for inspiration for their Goth/psych-rock sound, from hanging out at the Benedict Canyon house Sharon Tate was murdered in to listening to some of the darkest psychedelic groups of the '70s and '80s, including Black Sabbath and Siouxsie and the Banshees. Their vibe and sound are frenetic and heavy on the electric guitar, illuminating Bonnie Bloomgarden's vocals. Counting Iggy Pop as one of their fans and friends, the band's latest release *Darkness Rains*, is an opus of bluesy garage punk, taking on some occult themes and cult-like fervor not heard in many albums of its kind. Feel like one of their family at tonight's show at Alex's Bar.

Death Valley Girls, Egrets on Ergot, Girl Tears and the Vivids at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. $10. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

PHOTOS BY MERCEDES DEL REAL

Ironclad

Flights & Irons cooks its comfort-food cuisine in cast iron

BY EDWIN GOEI

Flights & Irons Urban Kitchen is a concept centered on cast iron. Employed in the cooking and service of its meals are pans, kettles and even casserole dishes made of the thermally efficient material. It keeps the food ripping hot and the nostalgia high. More than anything, it's intended to convey the message that this restaurant is a rustic, back-to-basics kind of a place. It also helps that a wood fire crackles and pops inside the oven in which almost all of the restaurant's cuisine is baked, roasted and seared.

The concept reminds me a lot of Noah von Blöm's Arc Restaurant in Costa Mesa. Von Blöm has become famous for consciously shunning modern cooking methods in favor of the primitive. But the chef at Flights & Irons doesn't strike me as another Luddite; he just seems to embrace cast-iron cooking because it makes sense for a majority of his dishes.

Take, for instance, his chili and cornbread, which come as a set. The chili is served in a cereal-bowl-sized kettle, and the cornbread still has the shape of the square cast-iron dish in which it was baked. Though I don't think the chili was cooked individually in a single-serving pot, it still benefits from being ladled and served in it. The heat melts the cheese and keeps everything at a temperature just below a low simmer. There were at least two kinds of beans used, and it has an overall taste that doesn't stray far from Hormel. But ordering and eating the chili here just felt right. As I dipped the crusty, caramelized corners of the cornbread into the stew, I imagined the campfire-cookout scene from *Blazing Saddles*, but with less flatulence.

Although not everything is served in cast iron, the appetizers are called "Little Irons," while the mains are "Big Irons." In between, there are salads, sandwiches and soups. The soups include the aforementioned chili, a French onion, and a tomato with coconut milk my waitress recommended ordering only if I was also going for the grilled cheese.

By far the most popular appetizer is the bourbon bacon meatballs, which arrive on a square cast-iron dish. The second most popular app is the fried green tomatoes, which does not. Rather, the sliced and cornmeal-breaded tomatoes are fried in an unseen cast-iron skillet, then layered on a normal plate with a creamy chipotle sauce and dollops of burrata, then garnished with a bit too much pickled onion and micro cilantro. It didn't much matter it wasn't served on a skillet, nor would it have made much sense given the cold mayo-like accompaniment. Also, the tomatoes are still crisp and hot, and they go down so fast that they're gone in a blink.

For a main course, you could get an "iron-seared" rib-eye or an "iron-roasted" chicken, but you'd be missing the point if you didn't order the shepherd's pie. It's not only the cheapest main entree, but it's also the culmination of Flights & Irons' entire mission statement. More important, it's just good—the literal incarnation of a classic meat-and-potatoes combo. The top layer consists of mashed potatoes so creamy they would be soup if they were any creamier. The bottom is a silky stew made from soft cubes of filet mignon, cabernet, onions, celery and carrots. When you scoop into the dish, you discover both layers have melded together so well you can't tell where one ends and the other begins. And it's so scalding hot you have to blow on it for a good minute.

Just in case, your waitress will tell you to "be careful, it's hot." In fact, if you order anything that's served on cast iron, she'll remind you and warn you every time. It's out of genuine concern that you might forget and also probably because she's seen people who have. After all, the first part of the restaurant's name means the place is basically a bar. Half the place resembles a cowboy saloon, and the other half a quaint village inn.

Heed all of her warnings, but also this one about the s'mores dessert skillet: The first bite will be thrilling. The toasted marshmallows stretching in webs, the dark-chocolate chips melting, the cookie dough reminding you of BJ's Pizookie®. But then the sweetness quickly becomes overwhelming. And because of the huge portion sizes of the meal you ate up to this point, the prospect of finishing the entire thing seems impossible.

The good news is you can take it home. And there's absolutely no need for another heated cast-iron pan to enjoy the leftover s'mores—just a cold glass of milk.

FLIGHTS & IRONS URBAN KITCHEN
376 Camino De Estrella, San Clemente, (949) 388-3991; flightsandirons.com. Open Tues.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-11:45 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Appetizers, $10-$13, Entrées, $23-$36. Beer and wine.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Oversaturated Anaheim?

In 2011, Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait looked at the two currently existing beer makers, Anaheim Brewery and Noble Ale Works, and asked, "How do we make this city the Napa Valley for beer?" The "Brew City" committee was formed, issues were addressed, and Anaheim became one of the easiest places in Orange County to open a brewery.

Seven years later, the city has more than a dozen production breweries and brewpubs, largely fueled by a thirsty local beer culture, two sports teams, Disneyland, and the largest convention center this side of the Mississippi. There's a mix of tiny operations such as Asylum Brewing and well-funded operations such as Bottle Logic, plus two of San Diego's biggest entities are creeping north with Modern Times and Karl Strauss.

I didn't realize how valuable Anaheim's beer soil was until massive beverage corporations moved in: Behemoth Anheuser-Busch's Golden Road, Constellation Brand's (#MexicaliResiste) billion-dollar Ballast Point at Downtown Disney, and MillerCoors' Saint Archer planted inside Anaheim Stadium.

Yet, two mid-size independent breweries are looking to open soon. Brewery X (a dream team of investors, beer lovers and brewers) and Brewheim, a brand built big.

As someone who marinates himself in local taprooms, bars and bottle shops, cracking into the beer business is not only about "build it, and they will come," but also about integrating into the existing culture. In order to make it, a place has to have flawless beer, branding that stands out in a sea of competition, knowledgeable and hospitable tasting-room staff, distributed beer events, a fun atmosphere, strong business sense, marketing, community outreach, and so much more. In this oversaturated town, the question now is "Who will survive?"

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

GREG NAGEL

Hi-Time Wine Cellars
December 2018 Wine of the Month
COLLIER CREEK 2016
"BIG ROOSTER" CAB. SAUV.
LODI $9.95 [212370]
The nose is overflowing with brilliant red fruits, ripe cherries, off-the-vine raspberries and red plum. A hint of bramble, earth, cola nut and leather play supporting cast to the primary fruit scents.
In the mouth, the fruit is still the star of the show. Bright, ripe flavors of fresh red plums, mixed red berries and Boysenberry are balanced by silky tannins and brisk acidity. Fruitful enough to enjoy solo, this will also pair well with holiday meals, late season barbecues and just about any hearty foods you can think of.
The finish is filled with bright, brilliant, lush fruits, lasting minutes and minutes.
250 Ogle Street • Costa Mesa
949.650.8463 • hitimewine.net
@mrhitime on Instagram & Twitter

Loaded and Stacked High

JJ Italian Deli is Italian and then some

ERIN DEWITT

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» ERIN DEWITT

This is no-frills lunch: order at the counter, grab a can of soda from the self-serve fridge, maybe pick up a snack-size bag of chips, and take a seat at one of the handful of tables, or take your food to go. It's technically fast food, a quick-service sandwich model that's lent itself to the largest restaurant chain in the world, but the food here tastes of homemade, old-school recipes, carefully put-together sandwiches towering with meat and sauces stewing for hours.

JJ Italian Deli, owned by husband-and-wife team John and Janet Tran, opened at the beginning of November, taking over a small spot on the corner of Long Beach Blvd. and Seventh St., which was previously occupied by Thai restaurant the Spoon Bistro.

Janet came to the United States from Cambodia a few decades ago and sharpened her restaurant skills in an Italian deli in El Segundo, where she and her husband both worked. "We were there for 20 years. That's where we learned to make Italian," she says of her former employer. "But we wanted our own restaurant."

The menu announces "Boar's Head" in huge letters above the lists of sandwiches, pastas and salads, with gold plaques displaying JJ's two specialties. The Long Beach Special sandwich comes with meatballs, pepperoni, pastrami and mozzarella, served hot. The other is the New York Style Reuben, a classic pairing of toasted rye slices, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, Thousand-Island dressing, stacked with about two inches of perfectly brined, thinly cut pastrami. You can get a "small," which isn't at all, or a "large" for an extra three dollars and have enough food to last the day.

Other sandwiches include the Tiny Toro, a cold, savory-sweet combo of honey-maple turkey, Swiss, lettuce, tomato and honey mustard. The Longshoreman hot sandwich is a monstrous concoction of salami, capicola, pepperoni, steak and bacon (heavy breathing), chipotle cheese, chipotle mayo, lettuce and tomato. JJ's signature sandwich menu is about two dozen variations of a meat-cheese-veggie combo. Vegetarians can order the Lovely Lily, which comes stacked with the standard sandwich vegetables plus avocado.

The meatless entrees are few, but satisfying. The vegan JJ special salad is a mix of lettuce (both shreds and leaves), tomato, cucumber, what seems like an entire avocado, red onion, raisins and walnuts, accompanied by a tangy-sweet Italian-seasoned white balsamic dressing. The Eggplant Parmesan is another house specialty, which Tran proudly says is one of her from-scratch plates. "The eggplant, marinara, all are homemade," she says. "So are the meatballs. Turkey meatballs, too."

There are signs everywhere. A chalkboard at the front door advertises bagel breakfast sandwiches, plus hot dogs. One dog comes with pastrami, mustard and pickle. The same sign is copied inside by the ordering counter. On the other side of the counter are hand-written paper signs that suggest adding fries or onion rings to your order, and one with a checklist of bread options such as organic whole-grain or Italian soft-roll. There's even a smoothie menu posted on the front window.

The plates are paper and the forks are plastic. Salads come in ready-to-go foil takeout containers. JJ's smacks of an old-school deli, but there's cross-cuisine flair everywhere. Want a Thai iced tea with your sausage tortellini? Vegan salad to accompany a meat-mountain sandwich? Sure. JJ Italian Deli manages to keep conventional deli traditions alive, while also catering to the varied appetites of the neighborhood.

Even at 10:45 a.m. on a Tuesday, customers trickle in to the tiny deli. One patron loudly asks if this is real Italian food. "Yes, it's real Italian!" Tran proclaims. To which the customer responds, "Good, 'cuz I'm tired of Subway."

JJ ITALIAN DELI
649 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach,
(562) 983-8998

THE 2018

OC WEEKLY

Holiday Guide

MUSCO CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Chapman University
FRI, DEC 14, 7:30PM
Michael Feinstein
Holiday Show
Envelope yourself in holiday warmth from the Ambassador of the Great American Songbook
"One of the most important musical forces of our time."
THU, JAN 24, 7:30PM
Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
FEATURING WORKS BY
Crystal Pite (Kidd Pivot) • William Forsythe
Nacho Duato • Alejandro Cerrudo
"Simply phenomenal" – Chicago Sun-Times
"Deeply gorgeous." – Time Out Chicago
SAT, FEB 2, 7:30PM
ROSANNE CASH
WITH JOHN LEVENTHAL
She Remembers Everything
"Profoundly poetic and personal." – Country Music Television
"Utterly new...Rocking attitude... Influential for years to come." – NPR, The 150 Greatest Albums Made by Women
THU, FEB 28, 7:30PM
KISHI BASHI
STRING QUARTET LIVE!
"Jubilant chamber pop with an infusion of electronic music." – The Wall Street Journal
As seen on NPR's Tiny Desk Concert Series
muscocenter.org
844-OC-MUSCO
415 N. Glassell Street, Orange, CA 92866
Artists, dates, and programs are subject to change.

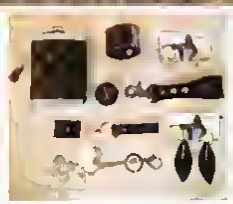
We present *to you*

OC Weekly's 2018 Holiday Guide. As you browse this special section, you'll find it's packed with unique gift ideas – from candles to heirloom goods and everything in between. It is in the spirit of trying to avoid the pitfalls of this end-of-the-year season that we've included fun ideas on hosting, where to go and what to eat and drink while you do it.

STATION 17

BE TRUE TO YOU

Boho Chic and Street Sassy Clothing,
Accessories, Gifts & Candy



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Gifts

Fleur De Lys (1)

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shopfleurdelys.com

Libro Mobile (2)

GIVE THE GIFT OF BOOKS

Sarah Rafael García's tiny bookstore offers affordable books by writers of color, bilingual and Spanish books for children, youth and adults, as well as books that speak to culture and social justice issues relevant to the local community And thanks to generous donors, LibroMobile is always stocked with a mix of new, collectible and curated used books for every reader.
www.libromobile.com

(1)

(2)

Laguna Beach Beer Company (3)

We're all about drinking local and shopping local. Give the beer lover on your holiday list some local brewery swag from Laguna Beach Beer Company and while your at it, we suggest throwing in a crowler of their Greeters Ale
www.lagunabeer.com

Alta Baja Market (4)

Besides having a great deli and the best micheladas in Orange County, Alta Baja Market & Deli is like an amnesty program come to life. The boutique market offers curated artisanal home goods and small-batch foodstuff from underrepresented makers in Baja California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas and beyond, from Oaxacan mole to Ensenada craft beer, from Colombian pottery made from a special clay to amaranth candy from Mexico City. The inventory is ever-changing and many offerings are one-of-a-kind, so make sure to buy whatever you have your eye on before it's gone

(5)

(3)

Rogers Gardens (5)

CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE: THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas at Roger's Gardens is a seasonal celebration of light and laughter. The aesthetic is fresh and modern, capturing the beauty of nature juxtaposed with sparkling metallics. Twinkling lights mingle with seasonal greens and delicate hand-blown glass baubles sparkle in a magical palette of color. Spark your holiday spirit and decorate your home for the holidays with a visit to Roger's Gardens. An enchanting festive wonderland awaits you.
www.rogersgardens.com/christmas-2018

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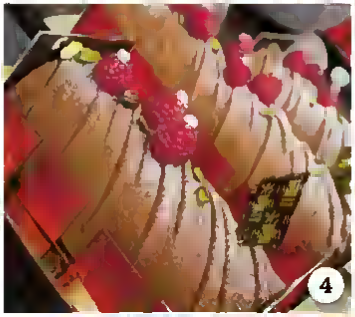
Holiday Hosting



1 Electric City Butcher

PORK 101 WORKSHOP

Are you ready for Christmas Dinner? Tune to sharpeo your carving knives along with your classic cooking skills. Michael Puglisi of Electric City Butcher, will show you how to break down a whole Llamo Seco pig This hands-on overview will teach you how ECB sources their animals how to identify the different parts of the pig, the basics of breaking it down, and how to prepare your favorite cuts. They'll review knife skills, seam butchery, and you'll get to cut any meat you take home. Each student takes home 4 lbs. of pork, gets an Electric City Butcher Tool bag (honing knife, twine, handouts, coupons), and 10% off any purchases in the shop that evening. Light food and refreshments served afterward.

www electriccitybutcher com

2 The Cheese Shop

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cheeseshopoc com

3 Hi-Time Wine Cellars

CHRISTMAS DINNER WINE PAIRING: WINES TO SERVE WITH TURKEY, WINES TO SERVE WITH PRIME RIB, WINES TO SERVE WITH DESSERT

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www hitimewine net

4 ST Pâtisserie Chocolat

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www thepastryschool org/classes/fraisier-2pm-n9zs7

the x-mas miracle punch

RECIPE BY OC *WEEKLY*'S 2018 BARTENDER OF THE YEAR

Cesar Cerrudo

INGREDIENTS

1 Bottle of your favorite Rum
2S oz of Cranberry Juice
1/4 Teaspoon of Cinnamon Powder
Squeeze 10 whole lemons
1 Bottle of Sparkling Apple Cider
Brown Sugar to Taste

DIRECTIONS

Mix everything together in a punch bowl, add ice, then pour into your desired glasses.
That's it.

Cheers!

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NAUGHTY or NICE?

Skip on the traditional presents and opt for these unique gift ideas for those naughty and nice.

1 Pink Kitty

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MSRP $129.95
17955 Sky Park Circle, Suite A, Irvine

2 Spanky's

SEXOKU GAME

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spankysonline.com

3 Action Bronson

F*CK, THAT'S DELICIOUS: AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO EATING WELL

This ain't no cookbook. This ain't no memoir. This is Action Bronson's devotional, a book about the over - whelming power of delicious—no, f*cking amazing—food. Bronson is this era's Homer, and F*ck, That's Delicious is a modern-day Odyssey, replete with or - gastic recipes, world travel, siren songs, and weed.
www.amazon.com/Thats-Delicious-Annotated-Guide-Eating/dp/1419726552

4 Passion City

SILK KIMONO

Wanna make it an extra-cozy time? Throw on this silky Charmeuse kimono robe and matching che - mise by Dreamgirls available at Passion City
www.passioncityadult.com

2

1

4

3

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Cannabis Gift Guide

Gift giving is tricky. There's nothing worse than having to fake a smile while unwrapping another ill fitting sweater from your step father who shops exclusively at Costco. And since your chances of being crushed during one of those Black Friday sales are higher than our President's hairline it's probably best to avoid the crowds and get your shopping done the "green" way with these gift ideas perfect for that special stoner in your life.

1

Daily High Club

SUBSCRIPTION BOX SERVICE

The world's most popular smoking subscription box service is your ticket to a happy holiday. With a new theme arriving at your door each month in discreet packaging, your loved ones will sleep sound at night knowing they have the latest in high-quality creative, and hand blown glass pipes and bongs to dab, smoke, or just stare at. Seriously, we can't get over how cute we look while smoking out of a bong shaped like a snowman and their vast assortment of papers, wraps, lighters, and accessories make great stocking stuffers. Save yourself the hassle of shuffling around a smoke shop full of grown men vaping to the sounds of Cypress hill and visit DailyHighClub to start your subscription today!

dailyhighclub.com

2

Shine

GIFT BOX

If you're reading this you probably live in Orange County. Which means you're either scraping by each month to make rent or you are filthy rich. Either way you work hard and you deserve to relax like royalty. Shine's 24 karat gold rolling papers will have you feeling like Midas himself while medicating with their gift box featuring a King sized cone ready for you to fill with whatever treasures you please. Once all paper currency has ceased to exist these babies will be worth their weight in well, gold.

Visit ShineRollingPapers to order your gift box now

shinerollingpapers.com

3

Dope Tours

DISPENSARY TOURS

For the cannabis connoisseur that already has everything you can get them the gift they didn't know they needed with Dope Tours. Their service provides a unique experience chosen by you that will transport your group around some of Los Angeles' best dispensaries and eateries as well as some of it's most famous landmarks. Tours include transportation in their custom fleet of vehicles where you can safely and discreetly sample top shelf flowers while learning about the benefits of THC and CBD. If your into nature rather than city they have options for hikes and beach visits as well. Head over to DopeTours to book your reservation today

dopetour.com/home/

4

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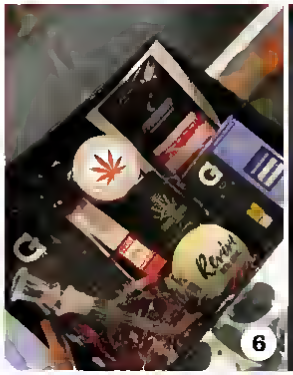

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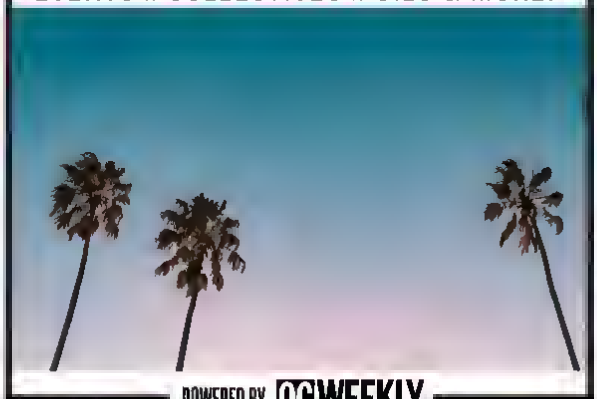

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GREG NAGEL

Don't Call Me Shirley

The Roscioli Pie and a Chapman Crafted pilsner at Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza Store

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW
» GREG NAGEL

As I sat down for a slice and a beer at Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza Store in Newport Beach, the only sound I could hear was *"CRUNCH, CCC-CRUNCHHHHHH."* As an insane mastication-misophonia sufferer, the noise made me cringe so hard I shd off my shiny red barstool. Thankfully, it wasn't coming from a fellow patron's mouth, but rather from a delivery truck slowly backing into the bustling restaurant's front window. The scene called to mind the one in *Airplane!* in which the plane crashes through the airport window from a misdirection on the tarmac. "The forklift? It's over there!"

Despite the shakeup outside—in which the word *pizza* was completely wiped from the lettering, but the window thankfully stayed intact—business continued as usual inside. Pizza is the food of locavores, rarely do people travel outside their ZIP codes for a slice, often settling for mediocrity and the predictable, all in the name of ooey-gooey convenience. But Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza Store is a whole other beast. Its pizza of the month for November included mashed potatoes, turkey and cranberry—an Instagrammer's Thanksgiving-tryptophan-induced dream.

December's specialty is no different. This month's square masterpiece was inspired by managing partner Trevor Kotchek's recent trip to Italy. Kotchek, composed for a man who just had his building defaced by a rookie driver, slides the behemoth across the table and declares, "This is the Roscioli Pie." It's named after the historic market and restaurant in Rome, a food-lover's dream destination.

Offered by the pie or *al taglio* (by the slice), the Roscioli shows off a rugged terrain of house-made mozzarella, globs of fresh green pesto, and heirloom tomatoes that have been sundried, all on a delightfully toothsome 24-hour crust. "Our kitchen manager, Bryon Morales, has been making this pesto for years," Kotchek notes. "It was time we got it on the menu."

I fold a slice as though it's a wallet and chomp down on the girthy bite. The fresh Burratta-like cheese and walnutty pesto go straight to my soul. The smell has me grinning ear-to-ear.

The pie is also a charity effort: Sgt. Pepperoni's will donate 100 percent of the cost of your Roscioli ($27 for the large, $8.50 for the 14-inch version, or by the slice as part of a meal deal) to Bracken's Kitchen, a nonprofit group that provides meals for those who need it most. The eatery will also be collecting cash donations. "It's the very core of Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza Store, and we're happy to be able to support the people who may not have enough to eat," says Kotchek.

Sgt. Pepperoni's recently revamped its beer taps, adding an incredible list of local independent breweries and an excellent selection of imported wine. Considering softball teams pony up to the bench-style seating after games, it's refreshing to see one small business support other small businesses. I opt for a Chapman Crafted pilsner, as the floral, cracker-dry beer is surely the perfect match for any pizza (and don't call me Shirley).

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Made In Mexico

The Frida Cinema welcomes Hola Mexico Film Fest

BY MATT COKER

HE SHINES AS EL SHINE

PELICULAS FILMS

While watching *Vuelven* (a.k.a. *Tigers are Not Afraid*), I wondered to myself, "Did Guillermo del Toro make this?" Nope, Issa López did, but del Toro has hailed *Vuelven* as one of the best Mexican films in recent years. You can find out if you agree with the Oscar-winning director of *The Shape of Water*, *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Pacific Rim* on Friday or Saturday, when *Vuelven* rolls at the Frida Cinema in downtown Santa Ana.

To determine whether it is indeed one of the best from our southern neighbor, you will need other Mexican titles with which to compare *Vuelven* (Friday, 7 p.m., Saturday, 9:30 p.m.). And you're in luck because the horror-fantasy picture that has won multiple awards worldwide opens the Hola Mexico Film Fest, which runs entries daily through Thursday, Dec. 13.

It will be difficult to challenge writer/director López's at times sad, funny, terrifying, compelling and visually stunning film, which begins with a title card in Spanish informing, "Since the beginning of the drug war in 2006, 160,000 have been killed and 53,000 have disappeared in Mexico. Entire areas of some cities are turning into ghost towns. There are no numbers for the children the dead and missing have left behind."

Children left behind are the film's focus. As they struggle to eat, sleep and survive, we learn that school is a welcome refuge, but drug-cartel violence makes places of learning as dangerous as campuses to the north with active-shooter visits.

Lying on a cold classroom floor, waiting for bullets to stop flying, is 10-year-old Estrella (Paola Lara), who tries to escape through fairy tales, much like Ofelia did in *Pan's Labyrinth*. That's complicated by horrors in the streets, ultraviolence on the television and the ghost of Estrella's mother everywhere.

She seeks relief by joining a gang of orphan boys led by El Shine (Juan Ramon Lopez), but brief moments in which the kids just get to be kids end abruptly when they mistakenly cross the local crime boss. The tension would seem manufactured had the filmmaker not managed to squeeze believable performances out of her young actors.

Writer/director Marcelo Tobar does the same with his older cast in *Oso Polar* (*Polar Bear*). Closeted gay man Heriberto (Humberto Busto, who resembles a Latino Giovanni Ribisi) uses his mother's old station wagon to take two former classmates he has not seen for years to an elementary-school reunion in Mexico City. Along the way, we discover boozy single mom Flor (Veronica Toussaint) and slimy narcissist Trujillo (Cristian Magaloni) bullied Heriberto back in the day—and he now has more than ridesharing on his mind.

Oso Polar (Sunday, 7 p.m.) is the first Mexican film entirely shot on an iPhone, so those prone to queasiness from shaky cameras should be prepared to close your eyes during some scenes lest your dinner goes all Jackson Pollock on the Frida's floor. Others may conclude those shots add to the grittiness of a disturbing tale.

The other Hola Mexico Film Fest movies, which were not previewed, are:

***Los adioses* (*The Eternal Feminine*)**. This bio-drama is on Mexican poet and author Rosario Castellanos, who is played as an adult by Karma Gidi. Director Natalia Beristáin picks up Castellanos' story when she is a bright but introverted university student, which gives Gidi a solid character arc before considering her subject is now one of Mexico's most important literary figures. (*Sat., 6:30 p.m., and followed by the fest's opening reception.*)

Sacúdete las Penas. Director/co-writer Andres Ibañez Diaz Infante's bio-drama focuses on Pepe Frituras (Emmanuel Orenday), who went from the stage as Mexico City's most famous dancer to the Palace of Lecumberri, the country's most dangerous penitentiary. (*Sun., 12:30 p.m.*)

***Camino a Marte* (*Road to Mars*)**. Writer/director Humberto Hinojosa Ozcariz's adventure-dramedy road picture also rolled at the most recent OC Film Fiesta. Emilia (Tessa Ia), who suffers from a terminal illness, embarks on a trip with her best friend, Violeta (Camila Sodi). Out on the road, they meet Mark (Luis Gerardo Méndez), who claims to be an extraterrestrial on a mission to destroy the planet. But the more time the three spend together, the more they question everything. (*Sun., 3 p.m.*)

***Me gusta, pero me asusta* (*I Like, But It Scares Me*)**. Award-winning writer/director Beto Gómez's comedy collides the worlds of the descendant (Alejandro Speitzer) of one of the most influential (and shady) families in the state of Sinaloa and an eccentric dreamer (Minnie West) taking a sabbatical year on daddy's dime to find her calling. (*Mon., 7 p.m.*)

***La gran promesa* (*The Big Promise*)**. From another award-winning filmmaker, Jorge Ramírez Suárez, comes an acclaimed drama about a war photographer (Juan Manuel Bernal) who kidnaps his newborn daughter to prevent her custody from falling into the wrong hands, sacrifices his citizenship and career by retreating to Europe after leaving the child in the care of close friends in Mexico, and, decades later, seeks a way home. (*Tues., 7 p.m.*)

***Eres mi pasión* (*You're My Passion*)**. Director Anwar Safa's bittersweet comedy is based on the successful Argentine film *El futbol o yo*. A passionate soccer aficionado (Mauricio Isaac) reaches a crossroads that forces him to choose between his sports addiction and his family. (*Wed., 7 p.m.*)

***¿Como matar a un esposo muerto?* (*Like Killing a Dead Husband*)**. Joel Núñez Arocha and Conrado Martínez's comedy was inspired by true events. A dedicated mother of two must destroy her ex-husband and his legacy after the womanizing businessman dies unexpectedly and leaves his fortune and the custody of his daughters to his brother. (*Thurs., Dec. 13, 7 p.m.*)

Hola Mexico Film Fest movies are presented in Spanish with English subtitles.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

HOLA MEXICO FILM FEST

at tha Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Fri.-Thurs., Dec. 13. $7-$10 per film.

"Ho, Ho Ho, Bitches"

BY MATT COKER

Persona. Classic films by acclaimed writer/director/producer Ingmar Bergman are presented all month. His radical 1966 film stars Liv Ullman as a stage actress who has mysteriously gone mute and Bibi Andersson as the young nurse caring for her in a remote island cottage. While isolated there, they experience a mysterious spiritual and emotional transference. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana. thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Dec. 6, 2, 4 & 6 p.m. $7-$10.*

Puoi bacaire lo sposo (You May Kiss the Groom). Italian Movie Night presents Alessandro Genovesi's comedy that was released in Italy in March. Happily engaged Antonio (Cristiano Caccamo) brings his fiance, Paulo (Salvatore Esposito) to the old Italian village of his birth to meet his headstrong parents and reveal his sexuality, seeking to make a town founded on religious tradition understand that love is love. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, 26762 Verdugo St., San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Thurs., Dec. 6, 7 p.m. $10.*

RuPaul's Drag Race Holi-slay Spectacular. First, drag hostesses Isabella Xochitl and Electra Kute perform live. Then it's the televised special event that features eight queens from *RuPaul's Drag Race* past competing to become America's first Drag Race Christmas Queen. Seating is limited, those in drag can choose a free soda or popcorn, and beer and cocktails can be purchased by those 21+. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., doors open, 9 p.m., prescreening performance, 9:30 p.m., screening, 10 p.m. Free*

Slay Belles. Dan Walker's new horror flick is about three cosplayers (Kristine Kleber, Susan Slaughter and Hannah Wagner) breaking into Santa Land for Christmas Eve partying. Confronted by Krampus, the trio joins forces with Santa Claus (Barry Bostwick) to defeat the evil demon. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 4 p.m., Mon.-Thurs., Dec. 13, 10 p.m. $7-$10.*

Kusama: Infinity. This recent documentary shows how Yayoi Kusama overcame impossible odds to bring her radical vision to the world and become the top-selling artist on the planet. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Buttons: A New Musical Film. Tim James' new musical is *not* based on the life of comedian Red "Never Got a Dime" Buttons. Rather, it's a fairy tale set early in the Industrial Revolution. Two orphans meet elderly strangers (Dick Van Dyke and Angela Lansbury) who change their lives forever. Robert Redford and Kate Winslet narrate, and Patricia Ward Kelly hosts a special tribute to her late husband, legendary actor/dancer/director/choreographer Gene Kelly. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 12:55 p.m. $10-$12.50.*

Bloodsport. It's a 30th-anniversary screening of Newt Arnold's 1988 martial-arts cult classic that claims to be the true story of fight choreographer Frank Dux. American soldier Dux (Jean-Claude Van Damme and his thick, Belgian accent) travels to Hong Kong in hopes of being accepted into a highly secret and extremely violent martial-arts competition. Dux endures the underworld, difficult training, a romance with a journalist (Leah Ayres) and Army allegations of being AWOL. *The Frida Cinema; thefridacinema.org. Sat., 9 p.m., Sun., 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. The pioneering midnight movie starts with the car of sweethearts Brad and Janet (Barry Bostwick and Susan Sarandon) breaking down near the eerie mansion of Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry). The transvestite scientist's home also hosts a rocking biker (Meat Loaf), a creepy butler (Richard O'Brien) and assorted freaks, including a hunk of beefcake named "Rocky." Live shadow-cast troupe Midnight Insanity performs. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

White Christmas. Fathom Events and TCM Big Screen Classics present the Irving Berlin musical about two military veterans (Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye) teaming up after the war to become a hot song-and-dance duo. They join up with a sister act (composed of Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen) for a snowy Christmas in Vermont. The screening event includes insights from Turner Classic Movies host Ben Mankiewicz. *AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, (714) 769-4288; AMC Tustin Legacy at the District, (714) 258-7036; Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932; Cinemark at the Pike Theaters, (562) 435-5754; Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Irvine Spectrum 21, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26, (844) 462-7342; Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sun. & Wed., 2 & 7 p.m. $12.50.*

The Seventh Seal. The Ingmar Bergman retrospective continues with his 1957 classic about an exhausted knight (Max von Sydow) who is disillusioned after a decade of battling in the Crusades. On a desolate beach, he comes face to face with Death (Bengt Ekerot), who challenges him to a fateful game of chess. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5:30, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Jim Henson's Holiday Special. Two holiday specials helmed by the Muppets' creator have been remastered. *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas,* which features music by Paul Williams, is about a poor family trying to win a $50 talent show prize so they can afford presents. *The Bells of Fraggle Rock* has Gobo Fraggle venturing to the center of Fraggle Rock to figure out why the spirit of the season eludes him. This screening event includes a new featurette and a special guest. *AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, (714) 769-4288; AMC Tustin Legacy at the District, (714) 258-7036; Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932; Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Big Newport 6, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Brea Stadium West 10, (714) 672-4136; Edwards Foothill Towne Center Stadium 22, (949) 588-9402; Edwards Irvine Spectrum 21, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26, (844) 462-7342; Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Mon., 4 & 7 p.m. $10-$12.50.*

George Takei's Allegiance on Broadway 2017. Inspired by the true life of *Star Trek*'s George Takei, this Broadway musical returns to the big screen accompanied by a conversation with the creative team. A mysterious envelope sends Sam Kimura (Takei) back 60 years to his younger days (when he is portrayed by Telly Leung). He and his sister Kei (Tony winner Lea Salonga) try to rescue their parents from the wrongful imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. *AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, (714) 769-4288; AMC Tustin Legacy at the District, (714) 258-7036; Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932; Cinemark at the Pike Theaters, (562) 435-5754; Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Big Newport 6, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Brea Stadium West 10, (714) 672-4136; Edwards Foothill Towne Center Stadium 22, (949) 588-9402; Edwards Irvine Spectrum 21, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26, (844) 462-7342; Regal Garden Grove Stadium 16, (844) 462-7342; Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $15*

Fanny and Alexander: The Complete Television Version. The Ingmar Bergman retrospective concludes with his uncut 1982 masterpiece about a family in turn-of-the-century Sweden, where the young children experience various comedies and tragedies. We're talking the 312-minute version that played on Swedish TV, not the Oscar winner that had two hours trimmed before its U.S. release. Presented in Swedish with English subtitles. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., Dec. 13, 1 & 7 p.m. $7-$10.*

Elf. A grown man (Will Ferrell) in green tights wreaks havoc on elves and Santa's village because of his size, so he is sent to New York City to discover his real identity. And that his dad is Jimmy Fucking Caan—KICKASS! Bring chairs and blankets to this outdoor screening, and while no outside food is allowed, grub is available at nearby stands and restaurants. *Pacific City, Level 2 (near Saint Marc and Smocking Birds), 21010 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, www.gopacificcity.com/events/ Wed., 6 p.m. Free*

Never-Ending Man: Hayao Miyazaki. Academy Award-winning director, animator and Studio Ghibli co-founder Hayao Miyazaki (*Spirited Away, Princess Mononoke, My Neighbor Totoro*) announced his retirement at age 72 in 2013. But the master of hand-drawn anime could not overcome a burning desire to create. Filmed over two years and presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this new documentary shows Miyazaki overcoming struggles to create his first computer-animated film, the short *Boro the Caterpillar. AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, (714) 769-4288; AMC Tustin Legacy at the District, (714) 258-7036; Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932; Cinemark at the Pike Theaters, (562) 435-5754; Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Big Newport 6, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Brea Stadium West 10, (714) 672-4136; Edwards Foothill Towne Center Stadium 22, (949) 588-9402; Edwards Irvine Spectrum 21, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26, (844) 462-7342; Regal Garden Grove Stadium 16, (844) 462-7342; Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. $12.50.*

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Upcoming Events

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Enarmored

Bowers Museum's 'Knights in Armor' and 'African Twilight' challenge the concept of civilization

BY JOEL BEERS

As principal lyricist, Robert Hunter (yes, Virginia, those 28-minute meandering jams did have words from time to time) wrote in 1974's "Scarlet Begonias" "Once in a while you get shown the light, in the strangest of places, if you look at it right."

That is one of the surprising takeaways from a Sunday afternoon spent at Bowers Museum, an OC institution that has transformed itself over the past 30 years from a City of Santa Ana-run homage to (often white-washed) Orange County history into one of the most acclaimed cultural arts museums on the West Coast. Two of its special exhibitions running through early January, while entirely unrelated, reveal one example of the dichotomy between so-called civilized societies and those that didn't win enough wars and subjugate other peoples to hold membership in that club. They are "Knights in Armor," a touring exhibition from a museum in Florence, Italy, featuring about 100 pieces of Medieval and Renaissance armor and arms, and "African Twilight: Vanishing Rituals & Ceremonies," a world premiere exhibition of photographs taken in 45 African countries over a span of 40 years. On the surface, both seem to peddle in, unfortunately, commonly held Western cultural narratives: that of the chivalrous knight decked out in full armor, gallantly and nobly fighting for king and God, and that of the continent of Africa populated by a bunch of half-naked savages enacting garish rituals and courting the favor of spooky supernatural deities in order to make some sense of a world they lack the intelligence to make sense of. But when each exhibit is informed by the other, it's clear that both stories are wildly incorrect.

To its credit, "Knights in Armor," a collaboration between the Stibbert Museum and Contemporanea Progetti, a Florence-based company that specializes in events surrounding Italian art and history, doesn't obscure the less-trumpeted aspects of the glorious fake age of chivalry. The texts accompanying the pieces is clear that many knights—particularly those adorned in pricy, full-body plate mail—were usually wealthy, and that class and allegiance to the Roman Catholic church were far more important than gallantry. What made them formidable on the battlefield wasn't the bulky armor that made it tough to move and fight, but the fact they were the only ones who rode horses. The relatively short window of plate armor, about 200 years, was slammed shut with the advent of firearms in the 1500s. And armor became nothing but a costly costume, worn to show off a person's wealth and status. In the 1800s, as many Europeans fearing rising industrialization and early globalization began to pine for a past that seemed purer and more honorable, armor became a wildly popular collectible if not outright fetish. The Stibbert Museum, which houses a vast collection of European armor, was founded by one such weirdo, an English antiquarian who turned his home into the ultimate Man Cave, as if that man loved the soft nurturing caress of metal on his naked white flesh.

COURTESY OF THE BOWERS MUSEUM

But though the history and artistry of the armor, weapons and other accoutrements on display are obvious (rest assured, military-arms buffs, you'll dig it), there's also something gross about it. Whether used in battle or not, everything in this exhibition was, in some fashion, designed to kill, or not be killed—and to champion the war machine that made it possible.

In contrast to this hard-on for militaristic might-makes-right, the stunningly beautiful and colorful photographs and videos that comprise "African Twilight" illustrate that while cultures that champion individuality, borne out by men of steel, may write the history books, those more concerned with connection and community are far more interesting and real. The rituals, ceremonies and traditions documented by photographers and explorers Carol Beckwith and Angela Fisher, feature people wearing wildly colorful costumes and enormous masks, staging elaborate dances, appealing to supernatural deities and disfiguring themselves. But while seeming bizarre to foreign eyes, it's all about connection, to their ancestors, each other and the land. The pieces document rites of passage and wedding, courtship and death ceremonies. And, as the exhibit explains, most of those rituals and traditions have disappeared, obliterated by modernization.

The juxtaposition of the two exhibitions, perhaps completely unintentional, is a vivid and sobering reminder that while the cultural history of those in the fast lane on the Civilization Highway get the glorification and romantic nostalgia, the cultural traditions of those in the slow lane are overlooked, derided and, often, vanish without a trace, submerged in the endless sands of time. And who is to say, really, what parts of each truly deserve remembrance and commemoration, which are the more savage and barbaric, and which ones tell us something more substantive about the experience of being human?

BOWERS MUSEUM
2002 W. Broadway St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3560; www.bowers.org. "Knights in Shining Armor," $20-$23; ages 3-11, $6. Through Jan. 13, 2019. "African Twilight," $10-$13. Through Jan. 6, 2019.

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» AIMEE MURILLO

Dec. 7-13

"MANDANA MOGHADDAM: EXODUS" A relevant exhibit, "Exodus," uses video to examine the experience of refugees in transit and the material objects they leave behind. Open Tue.-Thu., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Grand Central Art Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 567-7233; www.grandcentralartcenter.com.

"HALF NAKED III, FEATURING RAY TURNER" The artist paints portraits that pit the contemplative study of human emotion against the forcefulness of his brushstrokes. Open Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and by appointment. Joanne Artman Gallery, 326 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 510-5481, www.joanneartmangallery.com.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST Oscar Wilde's Victorian comedy about two protagonists who assume fictional personas towards their high-society cohorts in order to avoid certain social obligations. Fri., Dec. 7, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 8, 2 & 8 p.m., Sun., Dec. 9, 2 p.m. $11-$18. UCI Claire Trevor Little Theatre, 4000 Mesa Rd., Irvine. (949) 824-2787, www.arts.uci.edu.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: A CHRISTMAS ROSE A modern retelling of the fairy tale, only brought with an interactive experience: audiences are encouraged to cheer, yell and sing along with the characters. Wed., Thu., Fri., 7 p.m., Sat. & Sun., noon & 4 p.m. $41-$76. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-2787, www.lagunaplayhouse.com.

JANE AUSTEN'S EMMA THE MUSICAL A young matchmaker named Emma finds a suitor for her friend Harriet, but her affections are actually meant for Emma instead. Thu. 7:30 p.m., Fri. and Sat., 8 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m. $41-$45. Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (888) 455-4212; chancetheater.com.

"D.W. FRYDENDALL'S HAUNTED MANSION" A solo show that celebrates the classic Disneyland attraction, the Haunted Mansion, through vibrant tribute art. Sat. 7 p.m. Free. The Dork Art Emporium, 256 Elm Ave., Long Beach. (562) 612-1118; www.dorkartemporium.com.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: THE RADIO PLAY A struggling 1940s radio station owner calls on his friends to help deliver a touching radio play of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* for one last broadcast. Sun., Dec. 9, 1 p.m. $12.50-$25. Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton. (714) 738-8595, themnck.org.

"ART UNDER PRESSURE" Printmaker Anne Moore brings her unique one of a kind art made from monotype pressing, which reveal an abstract final result. Open daily noon-5 p.m. and by appointment. Free. Sandstone Gallery, Laguna, 384-A N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-5775; sandstonegallery.com.

DIY Directors

Kilson Street puts a lens on OC's local music scene

BY NATE JACKSON

Most musicians dream of taking their songs from the garage and exposing them to the world. In 2013, Modesto "Mo" Briseño turned on a cheap camcorder and invited bands over to play with the hope of exposing the world to his garage.

Capturing local bands in their embryonic stage as they seek their first shreds of acknowledgment is something the entire music world can relate to. After five years and more than 100 episodes, Briseño's YouTube series *Kilson Street* still gives OC artists a platform to grow and show what they can do on their way to finding a fan base. With the help of host Richard Bernal, Mo's brother Miguel, and a handful of local writers and creatives, this monthly video series based in Santa Ana became an unlikely staple, with its mix of live performances, band interviews, hair-brained skits and man-on-the-street coverage of local events. The show is loud, yet somehow low-key and delivers a few laughs in between, bringing viewers into a version of *SNL* with a twist.

"For us it's like the reverse of that," Briseño says. "*SNL* is a comedy show with pretty good music acts on it, *Kilson Street*'s a show for bands with great music and a couple of little skits here and there and an interview. The band is who you're here to see."

Kilson Street taps into a mix of well-known acts such as the Cat Signs, Hammered Satin and the Hurricanes and rising upstarts such as the Tritones and even a few international acts (including recent guests Diavol Strain from Chile). "We've reached a point where some of the bands who come on are really big fans of the show and really excited to be on it," says Bernal, *Kilson Street*'s mustachioed, often-stoic-looking host. "It's cool and weird because we never experienced anything like that."

The members are now several years removed from their days as laid-back, post-high-school, live-at-home musicians in their early 20s. And these days, the core of the *Kilson Street* crew gets more inquiries from bands than it can keep up with. "We could've gotten through [100 shows] a lot faster, but we have lives and jobs and stuff," says Briseño, now 31, during a rare moment of relaxation. "Right now, we're treating it as a 'season' format, so we're on for four months, and then take a break and start again."

Miguel adds, "We used to release them a week after recording them, which was pretty hectic."

Briseño and Bernal began toying with the process of filming a show together in late 2012. Though it began as a project with Suavecito Pomade to record bands for videos promoting its products, when that idea fell through, Briseño and Bernal forged ahead to put together a show with a concept that was similar to a local version of *Jam In Van*, *Tiny Desk Concerts* and *SNL*, with a dash of *Wayne's World*.

"I realized there wasn't anything out there where bands could get recorded and pretty much get a full press kit for free," Briseño says. "For me and my brother and Richard, when we were playing in bands, we never had anything like that. So we figured why the hell not?"

The location for the show was (and still is) Briseño's mom's garage, appropriately located off Kilson Street and Edinger Avenue. This is the place where he would practice and play in bands himself. The walls—cluttered with soundproofing, band equipment and posters—transport you to an alternate world, one shielded from the regular Santa Ana suburban life beyond the house. "A lot of bands are familiar with this set-up; it's not like an intimidating TV studio," Briseño says. "The hope was that bands would come in and feel like this is just like where they practice."

Recruiting locals to play in front of the camera and a small crew of strangers was harder than they had imagined. Add to that technical difficulties as a result of learning how to produce a nearly half-hour makeshift TV show on the fly with hand-me-down equipment. "In the first bunch of episodes, there was always something going wrong," Miguel says. "But we've been learning, and after 110 episodes, it feels like second nature to us."

Holding the show together are the random, hokey, often technically challenged infomercials, skits and scene interviews the guys put together to fill the time: commercials for "Vaginol," skits such as "Stupid Stick Figure Animation Time," *Daily Show*-style news from "Pat McGroin" and appearances from the show's dog mascot Fee Fee, among other bits. Just like some of the more random parts of the show that probably don't fit together on paper, there's something special about the unplanned, haphazard elements of *Kilson Street* that help it all come together, even when the bands the shows are based around don't seem like a good fit either.

"Mo will tell me sometimes about a band that's gonna be on, and I listen to [them], and I'm like, 'Why the hell did you book that band?'" Bernal says. "Sometimes, it just doesn't make sense to me, but once the band is in the garage and they start to play, a different kind of magic happens and the band gets to show their true colors."

They've had their share of breakout stars over the years (bands such as Tropa Magica, the Garden and their side band Enjoy have been on a handful of times). But for most local acts, *Kilson Street* is also like a permanent moment of bands that don't stand the test of time. "We like to joke that a lot of the bands that come on *Kilson Street* are no longer around," Briseño says. "That's the reality of it as we move throughout the years."

In that respect, what the show does, aside from getting bands exposure and making people laugh, is cobbling together a historical record for OC bands who are determined to get out there and make their mark.

With five years behind them, it would be understandable if the guys who've now moved out of their parents' houses, got full-time jobs and are beginning the trek into adulthood had no time to continue with *Kilson Street*. Though it's not as easy as it used to be to spend endless hours editing, writing and goofing off, they say keeping up their contribution to the local scene is what keeps them excited about music in OC. As long as artists are plugged in and ready to do the damn thing, so are they.

"It doesn't seem like a chore or work," Briseño says. "We're actually presenting and helping bands—that's one of the best things I can see as a way to give back to a scene that gave us a lot."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

KILSON STREET CREW (LEFT TO RIGHT) MIGUEL, RICHARD AND MO

COURTESY OF MO BRISEÑO

The Never-Ending Hustle

An introduction to the author

JOHN GILHOOLEY

Editor's Note: *Welcome to Clocked In, a new monthly column from veteran punk Brad Logan of Leftover Crack, Rats in the Wall and the Adolescents about surviving day to day between tours as a working musician.*

On May 18, 2017, Chris Cornell was found dead from an apparent suicide hours after a nearly sold-out performance at Detroit's Fox Theater. He was in the prime of his career, with a long and impressive legacy to look back on. He was 52 years old—that's my age. I don't remember what I was doing on that date, but it's safe to say I was probably looking for work between tours. That's what I've done for most of the past 20 or so years that I've been a professional working musician.

When I say "professional," I mean for the past couple of decades, I've toured the world countless times, played on stages in front of thousands of people, made records for labels I only ever dreamed of recording for and for the most part met every musician I've ever looked up to. Professional by some standards, certainly by my own. Still, at the end of the day, I don't make enough money to live off the music, and unlike most people with 20-year careers, I am in a perpetual state of starting over—usually at the bottom.

I didn't know Cornell, but I was a fan. And I surely didn't know his reasons for pulling the plug on his own life. But I am no stranger to long-term clinical depression, drug addiction and alcoholism in my own life. Hell, I don't even need to know his reasons to understand why I have been at the brink many, many times. Simply put, life's a bitch, and if a guy like Cornell or any other seemingly successful icon who has done the same feels that doom was the answer to life's questions, I had to wonder what it was that kept me going. I know I'm not alone. There are many people in my line of work in this same spot. What keeps them pushing forward and continuing to create in the face of the shit storm/life blizzard that pelts them?

Such is why I've chosen to write this column. Being a working artist is not an easy road. In fact, I would advise against it. You're better off sticking with your day job, breeding, buying your piece of dirt and dying a happy death. I know everybody looks great and rich and famous and happy on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or whatever the fuck, but that's more often than not total fantasy. Over time, the victories and successes become the little things: the completed piece, an idea clicking, getting what's in your head into your hands. And it usually takes every piece of your soul to get there. It really only makes sense to those who have NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.

So I wanted to dig deep to analyze the what, where, when and why of an artist's survival, what musicians and artists are doing to keep the lights on while they work away obsessively on their chosen craft. It's been said the life chooses us, we don't choose the life. I already know self-destruction. And examples are well-documented for those that don't. What I'm not as familiar with is the other side of that coin: life and the will to carry on against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

As for myself? It's been mostly a stream of music-related jobs—at least in the beginning. Venues, record labels, record distributors, booking agents and tours as a tech for other bands—none of it came easy. There was a seemingly endless loop of slammed doors, unanswered emails and phone messages. And when I was fortunate enough to land a gig, it was all about working my ass off as if my life depended on it. Because it did.

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CLOCKED IN
» BRAD LOGAN

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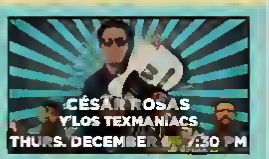

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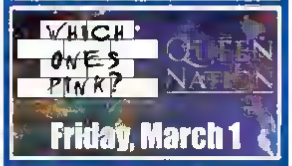

TICKETS AT EXS

concert guide»

COURTESY OF THE AQUABATS

Friday

ASHLEIGH FLYNN AND THE RIVETERS, CASEY NEILL AND THE NORWAY RATS 9 p.m. $5 21+. The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

THE AQUABATS (PERFORMING "THE FURY OF THE AQUABATS" WITH MEMBERS OF THE 1997 LINEUP); CJ RAMONE 6:30 p.m. $28, all ages. House of Blues Anaheim, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

RALEIGH RITCHIE 8 p.m. $22, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com.

LAW (RECORD RELEASE), THE BOTS, BODEGAS, BEARWULF $10, 8 p.m., 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292. www.alexsbar.com

Saturday

LOGAN MIZE 7 p.m., $18, all ages. House of Blues Anaheim, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim (714) 778-2583. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

SRATING POLLY, POTTY MOUTH 7 p.m., $12. Gardee Amp (The Locker Room), 12762 Main St., Gardee Grove. (949) 415-1544, gardeeamp.com

PAINTED WIVES, THEM EVILS, OF LIMBO 8 p.m., $10-$12, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

THE ADOLESCENTS, D.D.A., CH 3, THE CROSSAINTS 8 p.m., $18, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com.

COMMON KINGS 9 p.m., $35, 21+. Marty's on the Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995. www.martysonthenewport.com.

Sunday

ARIN RAY 8 p.m., $15, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com.

KOO KOO KANGA BOO 5 p.m., $15, all ages. House of Blues Anaheim, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

COMMON KINGS 9 p.m., $35, 21+. Marty's on the Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonthenewport.com.

Monday

CORDOVAS, RILO RRAVO 8 p.m. Free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com

MINUS THE BEAR 8 p.m., $30, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

Tuesday

STONE SOUR 7 p.m., $39.50, all ages. House of Blues Anaheim, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

DOM KENNEDY, CDZZ, JAY 306, WARM BREW 8 p.m., $35-$85, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com

THE ATARIS 9 p.m., $15, 21+. Marty's on the Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995. www.martysonthenewport.com

Wednesday

LITTLE STEVEN AND THE DISCIPLES OF SOUL 7 p.m., $40, all ages. House of Blues Anaheim, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

ALRIGHT SPIDER, BILLY KERNKAMP AND THE RRIDES, RITCHIN SUMMER. 8 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

QUEEN NAIJA. 8 p.m., $22-$65, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com

THE SOFT MOON, HIDE. 9 p.m., $16, 21+. Marty's on the Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonthenewport.com.

Thursday

ATREYU: IN OUR WAKE WITH SPECIAL GUESTS 6 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues Anaheim, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

WEAPONS OF MASS CREATION 9 p.m., $6, 21+. Marty's on the Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995. www.martysonthenewport.com.

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Cringe and Purge

I'm a 59-year-old man in good health. For basically my whole adult life, I've had this problem during intercourse with a woman of (1) being very quick to come and (2) having a too intense "cringey" sensation when I do so. This has led to often going soft at the prospect of intercourse. This too-intense feeling makes me stop moving when I come, which is not satisfying at all. It doesn't happen with handjobs or oral sex—they feel fine and good. Is this a known phenomenon? And most important, what can I do to get to a point where I can enjoy intercourse? This seriously messes up my enjoyment of sex and my confidence with women. One time, and only one time (out of many with a particular girlfriend), I had intercourse and it felt fine when I came—still thrusting, so I know it's possible. I have been practicing with a flesh light, but it's still painfully "cringey" when I come. It is not fun and rather depressing.

He Always Really Dreads Penetration And Regrets This

I shared your letter with Dr. Ashley Winter, a urologist in private practice in Portland, Oregon, and the co-host of *The Full Release*, a sex, health and relationship podcast. Dr. Winter wanted to note that her comments are a general discussion of a medical topic and NOT individual medical advice. She wanted me to emphasize this point—which she also emphasizes at the top of her terrific podcast—because Dr. Winter is a responsible *doctor* and not a card-carrying member of the Amalgamated Advice Columnists of America. (Membership in the AACA entitles advice columnists to say pretty much whatever they want.)

"There are three issues at play here," said Dr. Winter. "First, the pain or 'cringey' sensation only associated with vaginal and flesh light penetration. Second, being too quick to come. And third, erectile dysfunction. HARDPART insightfully suggests his ED may be related to his performance anxiety as well as anticipated pain, and I would agree with this. I would add that his quick ejaculation is most likely also caused by a mix of ED and pain—the body adapts to pain and erection loss by letting the swimmers off the hook early."

But why do you experience this pain only during penetrative sex? What is it about PIV (penis in vaginal) or PIF (penis in flesh light) that causes those painfully cringey feelings?

"If he thrusts more during these activities than he does during oral or hand stimulation, I would expect that either pelvic-floor-muscle dysfunction or a nerve issue related to the lower spine could be causing the flares," said Dr. Winter. "If he were my patient, I would want to know if he has less pain when his partner is on top, which would mean his pelvis is moving less. Also, does he have chronic low back pain? Bowel or bladder issues?"

Dr. Winter and I continued to generally discuss the medical topics raised by your question, HARDPART, and we generally discussed—this is not, again, individual medical advice, but a general discussion—two things someone with your particular issue might want to think about doing. First, a guy with your problem could try taking Viagra—or a related drug—while also using a penis numbing spray. And a guy with your problem should also have his pelvic floor checked out. A urologist can help a guy with a problem like yours determine if there's something wrong with the complex web of muscles and nerves that crowd together around your junk and, if it is a pelvic floor issue, refer him to a pelvic floor physical therapist.

Finally, a suggestion from me, the person with the AACA card: A guy with a problem like yours—a guy whose dick works a certain way and has worked that way for decades—could save himself the hassle of physical therapy and the side affects of Viagra by accepting his dick and the way his dick works. There are women out there who prefer oral and outercourse to PIV. HARDPART and you could bed those women with confidence.

Follow Dr. Ashley Winter on Twitter @AshleyGWinter and check out *The Full Release* podcast, which she co-hosts with comedian Mo Mandel, at thefullreleasepod.com.

SavageLove

» DAN SAVAGE

I'm a mostly straight guy in my 40s, and I'm married to a woman. I don't know if it's a midlife crisis or what, but I've decided that I want to get fucked in the ass once in my life. I will be visiting Hamburg soon, and it's my understanding that sex work is legal in Germany. I want your help sorting out the legal, ethical and practical issues.

1. Legal issue: Paying for sex in Germany is legal, right? But even if sex work is legal, that doesn't mean every sex worker is doing it voluntarily. I prefer people closer to my own age, and I imagine a 40-year-old sex worker is less likely to be exploited, right? What else can I do to ensure that I'm not with a trafficked individual?

2. Ethical issue: After many years and many near-divorce situations, my wife and I have adopted a more tolerant (or more apathetic) posture toward each other. She has on several occasions told me that she doesn't care who I fuck. While I haven't acted on it, she has said it often enough that I believe her. We've talked about an open relationship, but she wasn't enthusiastic. My best guess is that she doesn't want to know if I do anything "gay," while also not wanting me to form any emotional attachments. Do I ask her again if she really doesn't care who I fuck? Or do her previous statements suffice?

3. Practical issues: Is a condom enough protection? How do I avoid things like herpes and crabs? Other than emptying my colon bowels, what other steps should I take before asking a male German escort to fuck me in the ass? And how do I ask? Google Translate suggests "*Fick mich in den Arsch*," which is an unappealing thing to say. Maybe there's something sexier?

Legal, Ethical, And Practical

1. Sex work is, indeed, legal in Germany. You can minimize your chances of hiring someone who may not be doing sex work of their own free will by avoiding agencies and finding yourself an independent escort. But saving as how you're looking to hire a male in his 40s, LEAP: your odds of hiring someone doing sex work under duress are very, very low.

2. The wife who lovingly and apathetically tolerates your soon-to-be-fucked ass has already told you—and told you more than once—that she doesn't care who you fuck. She also doesn't want to know if you fuck someone else. Asking if she meant it immediately before flying off to Hamburg—double-checking to make sure she really doesn't care who you fuck—would basically mean telling her you know you're going to fuck someone else in Hamburg (and fuck them all "gay" and shit), and she's already told you she doesn't want to know. Taking her at her word (i.e., allowing her previous statements to suffice) is the right thing to do.

3. A condom offers highly effective protection from HIV, gonorrhea, syphilis and chlamydia. For added protection, LEAP: ask your doctor about getting on PrEP, a.k.a. Truvada, before your trip. It's a daily pill that, once built up to full strength (roughly a week) provides highly effective protection against HIV infection. While condoms do provide some protection against herpes, neither condoms nor PrEP will save you from crabs. To make sure your one-and-only ass fucking goes well: empty ye olde bowels and then douche ye olde rectum. Since most German escorts, like most German everybodies, speak English, LEAP: there is no need for an English-to-German dictionary. Just say, "Fuck my ass, please."

On the Lovecast (savagelovecast.com), the Atlantic's Katie Julian on why the kids aren't having sex. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.

Toke of the Week

» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

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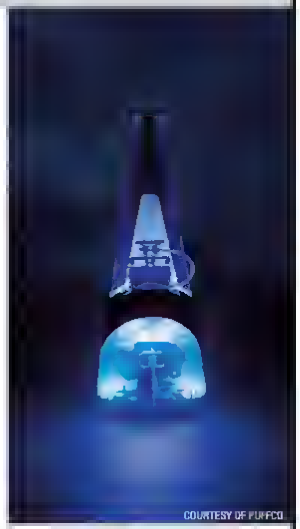

COURTESY OF PUFFCO

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Puffco (www.puffco.com) allows users to experience the full flavor, potency and euphoric effects from their herb of choice wherever they are without the hassle of a blow torch or hot nail. And the newly released Lightening line adds even more style to the already impressive model with customizable colored glass and accents throughout its streamlined design. With optional features such as Puffco's patented "travel pack," you'll never need to worry about leaving your medicine at home. Just make sure you act fast because these things sell out quicker than a furby in the '90s.

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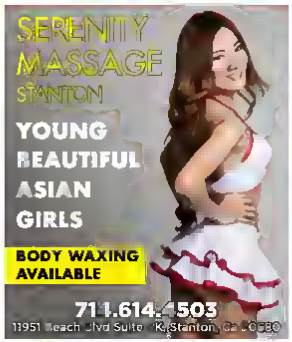

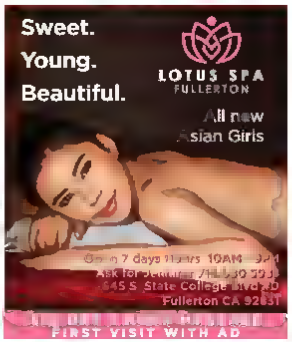

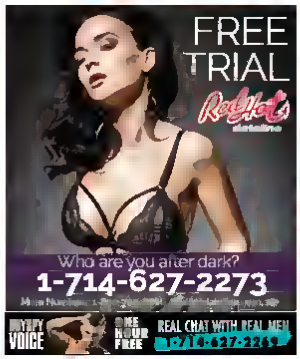

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Among the Invaders

Notes from the deluged migrant camp in Tijuana

BY SAM SLOVICK

The forecast is bleak. Cold and rainy as *catrachos* in damp clothes spread out into the city looking for work. Many of the Hondurans are wearing orange paper bracelets from the shelter at the Benito Juarez Sports Center in Tijuana, Mexico, where a reported 4,700 asylum seekers from the caravan currently live. The number of people looks closer to 7,000 to my eye.

The invasion of Tijuana is more like a deluge. A media diaspora where a flood of journalists from around the world migrate daily to the shelter, vying for position, pushing and shoving their way to a money shot.

Here, photographers, news crews with cameras, lights, audio and local talent; live-streamers, columnists, and video-journalists pour into the refugee camp. Some have made the journey from as far away as the Tijuana Marriott Hotel, 5.6 kilometers away. Alternative news outlets like Unicorn Riot and Renegade Media have had eyes on the ground and in the air for weeks.

Once among the invaders, I started live-streaming on the bus near Guadalajara with some asylum seekers and rode to Tijuana parked in an 8-bus caravan. It was a hopeful ride. The future unknowable, the past in the rear-view mirror, where you can watch the back end of the police escort for the duration of the trip.

Hopes now dashed, the rain is pounding the camp into an ark, the rising tide is making many think about migrating to the new shelter some 40 minutes away where there is reportedly no electricity.

The situation here has deteriorated into a refugee camp where the U.S. Border Patrol recently launched tear gas canisters and shot less-lethal projectiles at barefoot children in diapers who sleep on the ground at the shelter in the Benito Juarez Center nearby.

Tents and tarps spilled out of the shelter onto the sidewalk and into Cinco De Mayo street last week at the place where Mexican Marines cooked two meals a day in mobile kitchens. A cement blockade marks the dead-end just down the block from the center's main entrance, where a big steal barricade parallels the freeway at the U.S. Mexico border.

Inside the shelter, cement sidewalks cut paths through large areas of dirt and grass where large and small tents and a patchwork of tarps are strung up everywhere. Thousands of people are living here, under the bleachers, on the soccer field, the basketball court and in every available spot. Men and women with small children say they don't have enough food, water, that it's unsanitary with public showers and water from pipes in a cement wall. They say everyone is sick and that the bathrooms are disgusting, and that they ran out of baby formula four days ago and need other basic things.

SAM SLOVICK

The people from the caravan in the shelter are caught up in a campaign of misinformation and it's having a negative impact on their public profile, possibly making things dangerous for them. It's been recently reported that 300 to 600 convicted criminals are among the refugees at the shelter. Those numbers, spit out by Washington mouthpiece, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and run by mainstream media including *USA Today*, *LA Times* and Breitbart, don't represent the Department of Homeland Security data, which says that 95 percent of the asylum seekers traveling in the caravan do not have criminal histories. Some have been systematically filtered out along the way. The numbers are inaccurate. Publishing them without context is not journalism. It's propaganda.

"I'm going. We're going," says Chino, a Honduran guy I met on the bus who is sitting on his wet clothes in a plastic bag in the street with a few friends. Women and children brush shoulders with armored military vehicles with manned machine gun turrets in front of the Benito Juarez Center.

Inside, the shelter is a swamp, many people are in the street with their stuff waiting for busses to take them to the other shelter some 40 minutes away. The rumor is that there's no electricity or running water. It's cold. People are upset and so are the locals, dry but upset. At least that's what I'd heard, but most of the people I've talked to in Tijuana say they don't mind that the people from the caravan are here, but feel like they should follow protocol. They don't like the way the caravan rolled in. But if you keep talking, they all say that they hope everybody is okay, and they don't really care that they're here.

Javier Hernandez, for example, crossed the border to visit relatives nearby from Los Angeles. He grew up here, doesn't have a camera and says he can't imagine what it was like for people to make a decision to leave home and come here. He says if something good comes of this it's because of these people. His analysis is precise. "Look at us Mexicans," he says. "People are not pushing our government to do anything. We're like the United States' hitch. We gotta respect these people. These people set an example for us Mexicans. Ask for stuff. Demand shit. Demand a better life. People here in T.J., they work for American companies, they have their jobs and they put them in a little bus and they go to work. Is that what you want for your life? Demand something better for your life," he says.

Before that happens, these people are already here. It's raining and cold and they need blankets, dry clothes, food, medicine, water, baby formula and lots of other basics. There is already a good supply of caravan porn, clickbait on hand.

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